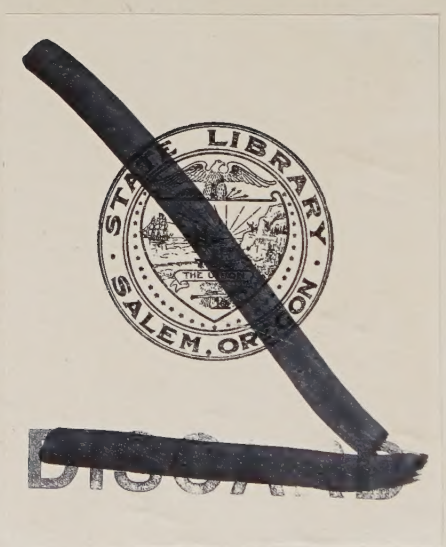
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JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

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JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

CHAPTER X

LOWELL AND THE WAR FOR THE UNION

1858–1865

When the *Atlantic Monthly* was founded, its conductors did not conceal their intention to make it a political magazine. It bore as its sub-head a title it has never relinquished, "A Magazine of Literature, Art, and Politics." The combination under Lowell's superintendence did not denote that articles were to be grouped under these heads; it intimated that in the attitude taken by the magazine both art and politics were to be discussed by men having the literary faculty, and that apprehension of subjects which finds its natural training not exclusively in practice and affairs but in acquaintance with great literature which is, after all, the express image of art and politics. Thus, the magazine did not become, as it might in lesser hands, a mere propaganda of reform, or the organ of a political party, neither did it assume the air of philosophical absenteeism. If one examines the early numbers he is struck with the preponderance of imaginative literature and of that artistic ele-

ment which finds expression in historical narrative or in the essay. The space given to discussion of affairs is not considerable, but evidently the subjects are chosen with deliberation, and they are treated if not with distinction yet with a good deal more than merely newspaper care.

Such articles are found at the latter end of the magazine, a place indeed naturally adapted to them, since in the practice of printing opportunity would thus be given for the latest possible consideration of current events; still, though the latest articles in the successive numbers, they were written at least a month, and more likely six weeks or two months even before they could come into the hands of readers, so that the authors were compelled to see things in the large far more than writers who might change their judgments over night on the receipt of a telegram.

These articles, corresponding, as far as a monthly could parallel a daily, to the leader of a journal, were usually one to a number. In the November, 1857, *Atlantic*, the first to be issued, was "The Financial Flurry," by Mr. Parke Godwin, who had been an important writer on the staff of *Putnam's Monthly*. In December appeared "Where will it End?" by Edmund Quincy, an enquiry into the outcome of slavery in America, somewhat in the nature of that gentleman's contributions to the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, when he and Lowell were associated there, though somewhat more moderate in manner. It was vigorous, pointed, and a reasonable summary of the situation politically, but it

was an appeal to fundamental principles, not to temporary political conditions. In January Mr. Godwin again wrote the political leader, this time on "The President's Message," which had been delivered by Mr. Buchanan at the coming together of Congress early in December, and the paper could therefore be regarded as a prompt consideration of the policy of the new administration. The article was brief and passed in review the three main topics of the currency, our foreign relations, and the Kansas-Nebraska difficulties. In February Mr. Godwin took up more in detail an examination of the Kansas Usurpation; there was no political article in March, but in April Lowell took a hand in a characteristic fashion.

Mr. Buchanan had been in office a year, and the momentous hour was approaching when the forces for and against the Union, with all that the Union stood for in the progress of freedom, were to be marshalled. The preliminary test of strength was already offered in Kansas, and the moral and intellectual debate was apparent in Washington. The principles for which the *Atlantic* stood were those for which the *Anti-Slavery Standard* had stood ten years before, but Lowell was now on a broader platform, since the *Atlantic* represented freedom, history, law, and civilization, where the *Standard* had represented the attack upon a pernicious system. Mr. Godwin was again called on to review the first year of the Buchanan administration, which he did in an article of about eight *Atlantic* pages, with the caption "Mr. Buchanan's Admin-

istration." The review was methodical and severe. It examined the record upon four leading points, the Mormon question, the Financial question, the Filibuster question, and the Kansas question. Mr. Godwin, a trained journalist of the older school, a man of resources in reading and scholarship, and a vigorous thinker, handled his subject with skill and analyzed the situation with clearness, giving the results in an incisive manner. The article accomplished what it set out to do, and is a capital example of a shrewd, forcible political leader.

Then Lowell took up the parable, and it is hardly likely that any observant reader of the April *Atlantic* failed to note that in stepping over the white line which separated the first eight from the latter six pages of the article, he had passed from the domain of one writer to that of another. It is quite as likely that, however he may have been impressed with the good sense and virility of the former part of the article, he was not so piqued by curiosity to know who wrote it, as he was in the case of the latter part, for that portion is instinct with a vivid personal note. If the reader of that day were familiar with Lowell's political writings of ten years before, he would not fail to attribute these pages to the editor of the magazine. The same note is struck in each, though the insouciance of wit is somewhat hidden by a fiery earnestness here, as if the author could not stop to play by the way, as he was wont to do when the political thunder-clouds were not gathering so ominously in the west.

Lowell did not preserve his share of the article among his "Political Essays," and this is not strange, not only because his writing was a detachment of a fuller article, but because with all its undoubted eloquence it was not so careful and rounded a piece of work as his later essays in the same field. In the absence of any correspondence on the subject, it is reasonable to conjecture that, having received Mr. Godwin's article and assigned it to the number, he was constrained to think that forcible as it was in its indictment of Mr. Buchanan's administration for errors and blunders, it might well afford the starting-point for a further arraignment, not of the administration in particular but of the nation itself so far as that was *particeps criminis* with the administration in its rôle of attorney for the slave-power.

But any such indictment as this must be drawn under the provisions of the moral law and find its precedents in history, and make its appeal to the conscience of the people as the final court. Into this business, therefore, Lowell threw himself with vehemence. He knew his own country's history, he knew also the history of man; and the moral ardor, the almost prophetic power which had been both his inheritance, and the characteristic of his early manhood when he was almost persuaded to be a Reformer, now flamed out. It was as if he had been storing energy during the ten years of comparative silence since the issue of the "Biglow Papers" and the contributions to the *Standard*.

"Looking at the administration of Mr. Buch-

anan," he begins, "from the point of view of enlightened statesmanship" (which was Mr. Godwin's), "we find nothing in it that is not contemptible; but when we regard it as the accredited exponent of the moral sense of a majority of our people, it is saved from contempt, indeed, but saved only because contempt is merged in a deeper feeling of humiliation and apprehension. Unparallelled as the outrages in Kansas have been, we regard them as insignificant in comparison with the deadlier fact that the Chief Magistrate of the Republic should strive to defend them by the small wiles of a village attorney, — that, when the honor of a nation and the principle of self-government are at stake, he should show himself unconscious of a higher judicature or a nobler style of pleading than those which would serve for a case of petty larceny, — and that he should be abetted by more than half the national representatives, while he brings down a case of public conscience to the moral level of those who are content with the maculate safety which they owe to a flaw in an indictment, or with the dingy innocence which is certified to by the disagreement of a jury."

Regarding this as a logical consequence of the profound national demoralization which followed the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Bill, and warming to his subject as he rehearses that deplorable business, he clears the way for his first proposition, by which he aims to lift the discussion into the higher air of history and elemental morality. "The capacity of the English race for self-

government," he proceeds, "is measured by their regard as well for the forms as the essence of law. A race conservative beyond all others of what is established, averse beyond all others to the heroic remedy of forcible revolution, they have yet three times in the space of a century and a half assumed the chances of rebellion and the certain perils of civil war, rather than submit to have Right infringed by Prerogative, and the scales of Justice made a cheat by false weights that kept the shape but lacked the substance of legitimate precedent. We are forced to think that there must be a bend sinister in the escutcheon of the descendants of such men, when we find them setting the form above the substance, and accepting as law that which is deadly to the spirit while it is true to the letter of legality. It is a spectacle portentous of moral lapse and social disorganization, to see a statesman, who has had fifty years' experience of American politics, quibbling in defence of Executive violence against a free community, as if the conscience of the nation were no more august a tribunal than a police justice sitting upon a paltry case of assault. . . . There is a Fate which spins and cuts the threads of national as of individual life, and the case of God against the people of these United States is not to be debated before any such petty tribunal as Mr. Buchanan and his advisers seem to suppose."

The difficulty, Lowell sees, is in the lack of any organized public sentiment, and thus in the weakness of the sense of responsibility. "The guilt of

every national sin comes back to the voter in a fraction, the denominator of which is several millions," and the need is of a thorough awakening of the individual conscience. It is the moral aspect of the great question before the country which is cardinal, yet the moral must go hand in hand with common sense, and Lowell contrasts the solidarity of the South, created by the gravitation of private interest, with the perpetual bickering of the Northern enemies of slavery amongst themselves. He calls for less scrutiny of the character of the allies the anti-slavery people draw to themselves, and more political forethought and practical sense. "The advantage of our opponents has been that they have always had some sharp practical measure, some definite and immediate object, to oppose to our voluminous propositions of abstract right. Again and again the whirlwind of oratorical enthusiasm has roused and heaped up the threatening masses of the Free States, and again and again we have seen them collapse like a waterspout into a crumbling heap of disintegrated bubbles before the compact bullet of political audacity.[1] While our legislatures have been resolving and re-resolving the principles of the Declaration of Independence, our adversaries have pushed their trenches, parallel after parallel, against the very citadel of our political equality."

Hence he calls for an offensive attitude on the part of the lovers of freedom. "Are we to be terrified any longer," he asks, "by such Chinese

[1] "Take up arms against a sea of troubles."

devices of warfare as the cry of Disunion, — a threat as hollow as the mask from which it issues, as harmless as the periodical suicides of Mantalini, as insincere as the spoiled child's refusal of his supper? We have no desire for a dissolution of our confederacy, though it is not for us to fear it. We will not allow it: we will not permit the Southern half of our dominion to become a Hayti. But there is no danger; the law that binds our system of confederate stars together is of stronger fibre than to be snapped by the trembling finger of Toombs or cut by the bloodless sword of Davis; the march of the Universe is not to be stayed because some gentleman in Buncombe declares that his sweet-potato patch shall not go along with it. The sweet attraction which knits the sons of Virginia to the Treasury has lost none of its controlling force. We must make up our minds to keep these deep-descended gentlemen in the Union, and must convince them that we have a work to accomplish in it and by means of it. If our Southern brethren have the curse of Canaan in their pious keeping, if the responsibility lie upon them to avenge the insults of Noah, on us devolves a more comprehensive obligation and the vindication of an elder doom; — it is for us to assert and to secure the claim of every son of Adam to the common inheritance ratified by the sentence, 'In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou earn thy bread.' We are to establish no aristocracy of race or complexion, no caste which nature and Revelation alike refuse to recognize, but the indefeasible right of man to

the soil which he subdues, and the muscles with which he subdues it. If this be a sectional creed, it is a sectionality which at least includes three hundred and fifty-nine degrees of the circle of man's political aspiration and physical activity, and we may as well be easy under the imputation."

The contempt with which Lowell treats the renewed threats of secession illustrates the blindness which he shared with most of his friends, and it is not likely that in after years he would have been so confident that the South had no higher principles mingled with the baser ones of love of prosperity and power. The "bloodless sword" of Davis also gave way in his phrase to the "drippin' red han'," and the deep gravity of war caused him to strike profounder notes. But it is not easy for men of this generation to realize the galling sense of humiliation which the men of Lowell's day felt at the manner in which the general government was made subservient to the demands of the slave power. So conscious were they of the steady degeneration of the political sense, that they were scarcely aware of the counter force of the rising tide of anti-slavery and union sentiment, so that the great wave which swept over the North after the attack upon Sumter came with almost as much a surprise to them as to the South.

It is in confession of this political degeneracy that the article proceeds, and Lowell lashes his countrymen with scorn for it, but he refuses to believe that this is to be the fate of the republic. "When we look back upon the providential series

of events which prepared this continent for the experiment of Democracy, — when we think of those forefathers for whom our mother England shed down from her august breasts the nutriment of ordered liberty, not unmixed with her best blood in the day of her trial, — when we remember the first two acts of our drama, that cost one king his head and his son a throne, and that third which cost another the fairest appanage of his crown and gave a new Hero to mankind, — we cannot believe it possible that this great scene, stretching from ocean to ocean, was prepared by the Almighty only for such men as Mr. Buchanan and his peers to show their feats of juggling on, even though the thimble-rig be on so colossal a scale that the stake is a territory larger than Britain. We cannot believe that this unhistoried continent, — this virgin leaf in the great diary of man's conquest over the planet, on which our fathers wrote two words of epic grandeur, — Plymouth and Bunker Hill, — is to bear for its colophon the record of men who inherited greatness and left it pusillanimity, — a republic, and made it anarchy, — freedom, and were content as serfs, — of men who, born to the noblest estate of grand ideas and fair expectancies the world had ever seen, bequeathed the sordid price of them in gold. The change is sad 'twixt now and then; the Great Republic is without influence in the councils of the world; to be an American, in Europe, is to be the accomplice of filibusters and slave-traders; instead of men and thought, as was hoped of us, we send to the Old World cotton, corn,

and tobacco, and are but as one of her outlying farms. Are we basely content with our pecuniary good-fortune? Do we look on the tall column of figures on the credit side of our national ledger as a sufficing monument of our glory as a people? Are we of the North better off as provinces of the Slave-holding States than as colonies of Great Britain? Are we content with our share in the administration of national affairs, because we are to have the ministry to Austria, and because the newspapers promise that James Gordon Bennett shall be sent out of the country to fill it?"

The subordination of the Free States in the administration of the government is traced to the moral disintegration which has set in, and after a recital in incisive terms of the act in subversion of true democracy which they have been compelled to witness, he closes with this appeal: "It lies in the hands of the people of the Free States to rescue themselves and the country by peaceable reform, ere it be too late, and there be no remedy left but that dangerous one of revolution, toward which Mr. Buchanan and his advisers seem bent on driving them. . . . Prosperity has deadened and bewildered us. It is time we remembered that History does not concern herself about material wealth, — that the life-blood of a nation is not that yellow tide which fluctuates in the arteries of Trade, — that its true revenues are religion, justice, sobriety, magnanimity, and the fair amenities of Art, — that it is only by the soul that any people has achieved greatness and made lasting conquests over the

future. We believe there is virtue enough left in the North and West to infuse health into our body politic; we believe that America will reassume that moral influence among the nations which she has allowed to fall into abeyance; and that our eagle, whose morning-flight the world watched with hope and expectation, shall no longer troop with unclean buzzards, but rouse himself and seek his eyrie to brood new eaglets that in time shall share with him the lordship of these Western heavens, and shall learn of him to shake the thunder from their invincible wings."

The merits and the defects of Lowell's political writings appear in this article. There is the divination of the real question, the reference to moral principles, and the witty phrase; but also there is that sort of coruscation of language which tends to conceal point and application. The writing is that of a good talker rather than of a good pleader. The very breadth of the play of mind in Lowell militated against directness of attack. He finds the seat of the difficulty not in this or that political blunder, but in a disintegration of the public conscience which had long been going on, and he sees no remedy for this but in the arousing of the individual responsibility. It is the voice of the preacher, and even so not of the crusading preacher.

He was more in his own field when writing the article on "The American Tract Society," since here his wit and satire were engaged on a theme where fundamental morals and expediency were at

issue, and two articles which followed on Rufus Choate and Caleb Cushing[1] had the incisiveness of brilliant newspaper work, and a breadth not to be looked for in a newspaper. "Phillips [the publisher] was so persuaded," he writes to Mr. Norton after the first had appeared, "of the stand given to the magazine by the Choate article that he has been at me ever since for another. So I have written a still longer one on Cushing. I think you will like it — though, on looking over the Choate article this morning, I am inclined to think that on the whole the better of the two. Better as a whole, I mean, for there are passages in this beyond any in that, I think. These personal things are not such as I should choose to do, for they subject me to all manner of vituperation; but one must take what immediate texts the newspapers afford him, and I accepted the responsibility in accepting my post."

It must be remembered that these articles were written two or three years before the great crisis was reached, and when in the minds of nearly all public men the question was one of everlasting debate, not yet of action, except so far as the debate found concrete expression in the struggle for possession in Kansas. In writing these personal papers Lowell therefore was using his scorn and satire in defence of the political idealists of whom he was one, and in attack of the political trimmers

[1] "The Pocket Celebration of the Fourth," in the *Atlantic* for August, 1858, and "A Sample of Consistency," in the same for November, 1858.

of whom he took Choate and Cushing as representatives. Yet even in these papers he recurs again and again to those fundamental political questions which underlie all notions of persons and parties. This is especially evident in the conclusion of the article on Caleb Cushing.

"The ethical aspects of slavery," he contends, "are not and cannot be the subject of consideration with any party which proposes to act under the Constitution of the United States. Nor are they called upon to consider its ethnological aspect. Their concern with it is confined to the domain of politics, and they are not called to the discussion of abstract principles, but of practical measures. The question, even in its political aspect, is one which goes to the very foundation of our theories and our institutions. It is simply, shall the course of the Republic be so directed as to subserve the interests of aristocracy or of democracy? Shall our territories be occupied by lord and serf or by intelligent freemen? by laborers who are owned, or by men who own themselves? The Republican party has no need of appealing to prejudice or passion. In this case there is a meaning in the phrase, 'Manifest Destiny.' America is to be the land of the workers, the country where, of all others, the intelligent brain and skilled hand of the mechanic, and the patient labor of those who till their own fields, are to stand them in greatest stead. We are to inaugurate and carry on the new system which makes Man of more value than Property, which will one day put the living value

of industry above the dead value of capital. Our republic was not born under Cancer, to go backward. Perhaps we do not like the prospect? Perhaps we love the picturesque charm with which novelists and poets have invested the old feudal order of things? That is not the question. This New World of ours is to be the world of great workers and small estates. The freemen whose capital is their two hands must inevitably become hostile to a system clumsy and barbarous like that of Slavery, which only carries to its last result the pitiless logic of selfishness, sure at last to subject the toil of the many to the irresponsible power of the few."

In these papers Lowell again separated himself instinctively from the extreme Abolitionists, the men, that is, who concentrated their attention exclusively upon the sin of slavery, and refused to use any political weapons for the overthrow of the system. He did not delay much over the economic aspects of the matter, but based his attacks almost wholly upon the eternal principles of Freedom. It was for Freedom, almost as a personal figure, that he had been a free lance from his youth, and he had come in his manhood to identify freedom with his country till he had a passionate jealousy for the fair name of the nation. He was not blind to the inconsistency which slavery created, but he refused to accept slavery as a permanent condition, and was strenuous in his belief that the fundamental, historical, and prophetic life of the nation was aggressively free, and made for freedom.

Hence he identified himself with the Republican party, in its early days, with cheerful alacrity, supporting it by his pen and his vote, and hence, also, as the lines were drawn more closely at the time of the election of Mr. Lincoln, his political articles in the *Atlantic* became more direct and more charged with a statesmanlike rather than with a merely opportune character. In October, 1860, he printed a paper on "The Election in November," which is preserved in his "Political Essays." It is a survey of the field on the eve of the great election, in which he aims to present the issue clearly. He finds it in the death struggle of the slaveholding interest, which has so long dominated national politics, but it is to him not a question of political preponderancy, but of the moral integrity of the non-slaveholding States. "We believe," he says, "that this election is a turning-point in our history; for, although there are four candidates, there are really, as everybody knows, but two parties, and a single question that divides them. . . . The cardinal question on which the whole policy of the country is to turn — a question, too, which this very election must decide in one way or the other — is the interpretation to be put upon certain clauses of the Constitution." After a witty analysis of the parties which trade most in the term "conservative," he makes a keen inquiry into the basis of Southern civilization, with the purpose of considering what degree of permanence there is in the society which rests on it, and reaches the conclusion that "in such communities the seeds of an

'irrepressible conflict' are surely, if slowly, ripening, and signs are daily multiplying that the true peril to their social organization is looked for, less in a revolt of the owned labor than in an insurrection of intelligence in the labor that owns itself and finds itself none the richer for it. To multiply such communities is to multiply weakness. The election in November turns on the single and simple question, Whether we shall consent to the indefinite multiplication of them; and the only party which stands plainly and unequivocally pledged against such a policy, nay, which is not either openly or impliedly in favor of it, — is the Republican party."

It is interesting to note that Lowell frankly expresses in this article his regret that Lincoln instead of Seward should have been selected as candidate for the presidency. He saw in Seward a reasonable and persistent exponent of the cardinal doctrines of the party, and hence he wished him at the front as the most conspicuous representative. "It was assumed that his nomination would have embittered the contest, and tainted the Republican creed with radicalism; but we doubt it. We cannot think that a party gains by not hitting its hardest, or by sugaring its opinions. Republicanism is not a conspiracy to obtain office under false pretences. It has a definite aim, an earnest purpose, and the unflinching tenacity of profound conviction." Evidently he had not yet, as very few at the East had, made the acquaintance of Mr. Lincoln, but he accepts the nomination with con-

fidence. "Mr. Lincoln," he says, "has proved both his ability and his integrity; he has had experience enough in public affairs to make him a statesman, and not enough to make him a politician. . . . He represents a party who know that true policy is gradual in its advances, that it is conditional and not absolute, that it must deal with facts and not with sentiments, but who know also that it is wiser to stamp out evil in the spark than to wait till there is no help but in fighting fire with fire. They are the only conservative party, because they are the only one that is not willing to pawn to-morrow for the means to gamble with to-day. They have no hostility to the South, but a determined one to doctrines of whose ruinous tendency every day more and more convinces them." And again he emphatically declares of the members of the party which he believes about to triumph at the polls: "They believe that slavery is a wrong morally, a mistake politically, and a misfortune practically, wherever it exists; that it has nullified our influence abroad and forced us to compromise with our better instincts at home; that it has perverted our government from its legitimate objects, weakened the respect for the laws by making them the tools of its purposes, and sapped the faith of men in any higher political morality than interest or any better statesmanship than chicane. They mean in every lawful way to hem it within its present limits."

Lowell confessed in a letter to Mr. Nordhoff,[1]

[1] *Letters*, i. 307–309.

written a few weeks after the election, when it will be remembered there was very little evidence to show that the Republican party had not recoiled from its own success, that he was greatly puzzled to gauge the actual mind of the public. "But one thing seems to me clear," he says, "that we have been running long enough by dead reckoning, and that it is time to take the height of the sun of righteousness." It was the time of Buchanan's attitude of helplessness, the logical result of a life spent in adjustment of principle to occasion. "Is it the effect of democracy," Lowell asks, "to make all our public men cowards? An ounce of pluck just now were worth a king's ransom. There is one comfort, though a shabby one, in the feeling that matters will come to such a pass that courage will be forced upon us, and that when there is no hope left we shall learn a little self-confidence from despair. That in such a crisis the fate of the country should be in the hands of a sneak! If the Republicans stand firm we shall be saved, even at the cost of disunion. If they yield, it is all up with us and with the experiment of democracy."

When he wrote this letter, he had already written and indeed printed his paper on "The Question of the Hour" in the *Atlantic* for January, 1861. However apparently inert and even dazed the North might be, and however paralyzed the federal government, there was little indecision at the South. South Carolina had already taken steps to "withdraw from the Union," and the Southern public men were in a high state of activ-

ity. In this article, which has not been reprinted, Lowell considers briefly the possibility of disunion through the action of the South. He is somewhat incredulous of the imminence of this danger, and the real question of the hour to him is whether the Free States, having taken a stand for freedom, will maintain their self-possession and spirit. He groans over the miserable straits to which the nation is reduced by having at its head in this critical hour a man of such mediocrity as Mr. Buchanan. Again he makes his familiar point that the political training of the party in power has caused a distinct degeneration in politics, and thus has brought about a state of things which renders resistance to the treasonable conduct of the leaders of secession weak and ineffective; and he points out with sagacity a source of weakness, which nearly a generation later was to draw from him a new political moral.

"It has been the misfortune of the United States that the conduct of their public affairs has passed more and more exclusively into the hands of men who have looked on politics as a game to be played rather than as a trust to be administered, and whose capital, whether of personal consideration or of livelihood, has been staked on a turn of the cards. A general skepticism has been induced, exceedingly dangerous in times like these. The fatal doctrine of rotation in office has transferred the loyalty of the numberless servants of the Government, and of those dependent on or influenced by them, from the nation to a party. For thousands

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of families, every change in the National Administration is as disastrous as revolution, and the Government has thus lost that influence which the idea of permanence and stability would exercise in a crisis like the present. At the present moment, the whole body of office-holders at the South is changed from a conservative to a disturbing element by a sense of the insecurity of their tenure. Their allegiance having always been to the party in power at Washington, and not to the Government of the Nation, they find it easy to transfer it to the dominant faction at home."

Even granting that the secessionists carry out their schemes, the losers, he points out, would not be the Free States. "The laws of trade cannot be changed, and the same causes which have built up their agriculture, commerce, and manufactures will not cease to be operative. The real wealth and strength of states, other things being equal, depends upon homogeneousness of population and variety of occupation, with a common interest and common habits of thought. The cotton-growing States, with their single staple, are at the mercy of chance. India, Australia, nay Africa herself, may cut the thread of their prosperity. Their population consists of two hostile races, and their bone and muscle, instead of being the partners, are the unwilling tools of their capital and intellect. The logical consequence of this political theory is despotism, which the necessity of coercing the subject race will make a military one."

A month later the situation had become still

more serious, and in his article "E Pluribus Unum," which is reprinted in "Political Essays," Lowell writes with an earnestness which appears even in the wit and humor that play over the surface. After discussing with an impatient scorn the sophisms of secession, he inquires if any new facts have come to light since the election which would lead the people to reconsider the resolution then made. "Since the election of Mr. Lincoln, not one of the arguments has lost its force, not a cipher of the statistics has been proved mistaken, on which the judgment of the people was made up." And then, after reaffirming the limitations of the power to be assumed by the Republican party, he bursts forth: —

"But the present question is one altogether transcending all limits of party and all theories of party policy. It is a question of national existence; it is a question whether Americans shall govern America, or whether a disappointed clique shall nullify all government now, and render a stable government difficult hereafter; it is a question, not whether we shall have civil war under certain contingencies, but whether we shall prevent it under any. It is idle, and worse than idle, to talk about Central Republics that can never be formed. We want neither Central Republics nor Northern Republics, but our own Republic and that of our fathers, destined one day to gather the whole continent under a flag that shall be the most august in the world. Having once known what it was to be members of a grand and peaceful con-

stellation, we shall not believe, without further proof, that the laws of our gravitation are to be abolished, and we flung forth into chaos, a hurly-burly of jostling and splintering stars, whenever Robert Toombs or Robert Rhett, or any other Bob of the secession kite, may give a flirt of self-importance. The first and greatest benefit of government is that it keeps the peace, that it insures every man his right, and not only that but the permanence of it. In order to do this, its first requisite is stability; and this once firmly settled, the greater the extent of conterminous territory that can be subjected to one system and one language and inspired by one patriotism, the better. . . . Slavery is no longer the matter in debate, and we must beware of being led off upon that side-issue. The matter now in hand is the reëstablishment of order, the reaffirmation of national unity, and the settling once for all whether there can be such a thing as a government without the right to use its power in self-defence." And he closes with the solemn words: "Peace is the greatest of blessings, when it is won and kept by manhood and wisdom; but it is a blessing that will not long be the housemate of cowardice. It is God alone who is powerful enough to let His authority slumber; it is only His laws that are strong enough to protect and avenge themselves. Every human government is bound to make its laws so far resemble His that they shall be uniform, certain, and unquestionable in their operations; and this it can do only by a timely show of power, and by an appeal

to that authority which is of divine right, inasmuch as its office is to maintain that order which is the single attribute of that Infinite Reason which we can clearly apprehend and of which we have hourly example."

The article headed "The Pickens-and-Stealins' Rebellion," which appeared in the *Atlantic* for June, 1861, was the latest of the political articles contributed by Lowell to the magazine while he was editor, and appeared just as he surrendered his charge to Mr. Fields. It was written immediately after the attack on Fort Sumter and in the glow of that popular rising which swept away all the flimsy structure of the politicians and showed the might of that conviction which Lowell never doubted to lie in the minds of the American people. He longed then for a great leader. Major Anderson served for a brief hour to typify the spirit of uncompromising fidelity to duty, but Lowell was disappointed in Lincoln's public utterances. He was impatient at the President's caution, and especially at the temporizing policy which he pursued toward the Border States, and he traced the course of events before the first gun was fired on Sumter with the evident conviction that a firmer policy would have been surer to defeat the plans of the Confederacy; but the splendid assertion of the Union spirit fills him with an almost awed sense of joy. "We have no doubt of the issue," he writes. "We believe that the strongest battalions are always on the side of God. The Southern army will be fighting for Jefferson Davis, or at most for the

liberty of self-misgovernment, while we go forth for the defence of principles which alone make government august and civil society possible. It is the very life of the nation that is at stake. There is no question here of dynasties, races, religions, but simply whether we will consent to include in our Bill of Rights — not merely as of equal validity with all other rights, whether natural or acquired, but by its very nature transcending and abrogating them all — the Right of Anarchy. We must convince men that treason against the ballot-box is as dangerous as treason against a throne, and that, if they play so desperate a game, they must stake their lives on the hazard. . . . A ten years' war would be cheap that gave us a country to be proud of, and a flag that should command the respect of the world because it was the symbol of the enthusiastic unity of a great nation. . . . We cannot think that the war we are entering on can end without some radical change in the system of African slavery. Whether it be doomed to a sudden extinction, or to a gradual abolition through economical causes, this war will not leave it where it was before. As a power in the state its reign is already over. The fiery tongue of the batteries in Charleston harbor accomplished in one day a conversion which the constancy of Garrison and the eloquence of Phillips had failed to bring about in thirty years. And whatever other result this war is destined to produce, it has already won for us a blessing worth everything to us as a nation in emancipating the public opinion of the North."

Thus in his last sentence he reiterates the judgment which he had over and over again pronounced in the whole series of these political papers, for he never lost sight of the fundamental fact that freedom resides in the spirit of man and is but recorded in his institutions.

Once more he wrote a prose paper for the *Atlantic*, moved by the attitude in England, for with others of his kind Lowell took grievously to heart the comments of the English press and the actions of the British government. In this paper, published December, 1861, entitled "Self-Possession *vs.* Prepossession," he finds unmistakable symptoms of reaction in England, since 1848, against liberalism in politics, and tries the criticism of the United States government in which the press indulged by the action of England toward Ireland and India; and finally he points out the restrictions imposed on any constitutional government by the very conditions of its existence, forbidding it to act in advance of the convictions of its people. This he does to defend the administration against the charge that it is indifferent to the question of emancipation. He is impatient indeed of the extreme caution of Mr. Lincoln and his associates, but he is nevertheless of the opinion that the time has not yet come for turning the war into a crusade. It is interesting to mark how uppermost in Lowell's mind is the cause of national unity. Time was when he drew near to the position taken by some of his anti-slavery associates that disunion was preferable to complicity with slavery; but as

the conflict between the two opposing forces deepened, he took more and more steadily the larger view, and his democratic principles became bound up with the unity of the nation, and at last with the supremacy of law as represented by the national cause.

"Is this then," he breaks out fervently at the close of his paper, "to be a commonplace war, a prosaic and peddling quarrel about cotton? Shall there be nothing to enlist enthusiasm or kindle fanaticism? Are we to have no cause like that for which our English republican ancestors died so gladly on the field, with such dignity on the scaffold? — no cause that shall give us a hero, who knows but a Cromwell? To our minds, though it may be obscure to Englishmen, who look on Lancashire as the centre of the universe, no army was ever enlisted for a nobler service than ours. Not only is it national life and a foremost place among nations that is at stake, but the vital principle of Law itself, the august foundation on which the very possibility of government, above all of self-government, rests as in the hollow of God's own hand. If democracy shall prove itself capable of having raised twenty millions of people to a level of thought where they can appreciate this cardinal truth, and can believe no sacrifice too great for its defence and establishment, then democracy will have vindicated itself beyond all chance of future cavil. Here, we think, is a Cause the experience of whose vicissitudes and the grandeur of whose triumph will be able to give us heroes and states-

men. The Slave-Power must be humbled, must be punished, — so humbled and so punished as to be a warning forever; but slavery is an evil transient in its cause and its consequence, compared with those which would result from unsettling the faith of a nation in its own manhood, and setting a whole generation of men hopelessly adrift in the formless void of anarchy."

The reserve with which he speaks of the President's policy is the wise tone to be adopted in a printed article. In his private letters, where such caution is not needed, he gives expression openly to his impatience. In a letter written at the same time as this article, he says: "I confess that my opinion of the Government does not rise, to say the least. If we are saved it will be God's doing, not man's, and will He save those who are not worth saving? Lincoln may be right, for aught I know, — prudence is certainly a good drag upon virtue, — but I guess an ounce of Frémont is worth a pound of long Abraham. Mr. L. seems to have a theory of carrying on war without hurting the enemy. He is incapable, apparently, of understanding that they *ought* to be hurt. The doing good to those that despitefully entreat us was not meant for enemies of the commonwealth. The devil's angels are those that do his work, and for such there is a lake of fire and brimstone prepared. We have been undertaking to frighten the Devil with cold pitch.

"At the same time it looks as if the rebels must be losing more than we. They *must* be poorly off

for most things that go to make up the efficiency of an army, and if they can't attack us what can they do? I am in a constant state of *un*pleasurable excitement. Jemmy[1] and Willy[2] are at Leesburg, in full sight of the enemy's pickets, and I can't bear to think of either of them being hurt. Mary was here last night, and though she puts a good face on it, there was something very painful to me in the hoarse hollowness of her voice. If they should die in battle well on into the enemy's lines, it would be all that one could ask, but it would be dreadful to have them picked off by those murdering cowards. Let 's think of something else."

A month later, and the boys he spoke of so affectionately and tremulously had fallen. In that most affecting of the second series of the "Biglow Papers," "Mr. Hosea Biglow to the Editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*," printed at the close of the war, he could refer to them in verse which holds all the passion of tears. Now, he can only send tidings to his most intimate friend in a few restrained words: "We have the worst news. Dear Willie is killed, and James badly wounded. They must have behaved like men. Think of poor Mary, whose husband is so ill that he cannot be told of it. She does not *know* it yet, though she is prepared. But he will be brought home this afternoon. He was truly a noble young fellow. Simple, brave, and pure I knew him to be in a very rare measure.

[1] James Jackson Lowell.
[2] William Lowell Putnam.

We have the pride of knowing that our men *must* have done well. Of the officers of the 20th, two were drowned, and *all* the rest (except Col. Lee) wounded. Willie was the only one killed. Wendell Holmes wounded. Last despatch says, 'Lowell and Holmes doing well this morning,' — that 's to-day. Thank God for that, and that they all did their duty." Two days later he added: "He came home yesterday afternoon, his face little changed, they tell me, and with a smile on it. He got his wound as we could wish. The adjutant of the regiment was hit, Willie sprang forward to help him, and was shot instantly. Jamie sprang to help him, and was hit, but will be about again in ten days or so. . . . It is some consolation to think that he was struck in so graceful an action, and his wound is in front, as I knew it would be."

The depth of feeling which appears in his prose at this time, as he tries to set forth the essential character of the great conflict, could scarcely fail to find manifestation in poetry, since that was his native speech. Yet it required genuine possession of mind. In the years just preceding the actual breaking out of war Lowell could, as we have seen, treat with badinage such manifestations as the American Tract Society, and the speech-making of Choate and Cushing; he could, indeed, pass in these papers from satire to earnest examination of fundamentals; but somehow he could not bring himself to use the keener weapon which he had handled so skilfully in the discussion over Texas and the Mexican War. "Friendly people say to

me sometimes," he writes to Thomas Hughes, 13 September, 1859, "'write us more "Biglow Papers,"' and I have even been simple enough to try, only to find that I could not." And a couple of months later R. G. White writes: "The *Atlantic* has just come in, and I miss what you led me to expect from your friend B. O. F. Sawin." He had plainly made a deliberate attempt, for in July of this year he was writing to Mr. Norton: "I have a new 'Biglow' running in my head, and I shall write it as soon as my brain clears off. At present I feel all the time like the next morning without having had the day before, which is too bad. I *think* my new 'Biglow' will be funny. If not you will never see it. It will be on the reopening of the slave trade, and some rather humorous combinations have come into my mind. We shall see."

It is not improbable that the impetus to verse came from the stirring of his personal emotions in the autumn of 1861, when he was following with anxious yet proud emotions the career of the two nephews whom he loved with that freedom which an uncle bestows on those who, not his own children, are yet his children's nearest kin. It was on 20 September that he wrote of the "constant state of *un*pleasurable excitement" under which he labored. On 8 October he writes to Mr. Fields, who had been urging him to send a contribution to the *Atlantic:* "I set about a poem last night, — *apropos* of the times, — and hope to finish it to-morrow, and if it turn out to be good for

anything, I will send it at once, and you can print it or no as you like."

This poem was "The Washers of the Shroud," which appeared in the November *Atlantic*. The same thought prevails in this poem which found ampler expression in his prose, as we have seen, a conviction that his country was not to "join the waiting ghosts of names," but was to have the

> "larger manhood, saved for those
> That walk unblenching through the trial-fires."[1]

How deeply he felt the poem may be seen not only in the solemn measure of the verse itself, but in the confession of physical exhaustion in which the writing of it left him.[2] Most impressive was the coincidence of the final stanza with the news which reached Elmwood just as the poem itself fell under the eye of the great public. "God, give us peace!" he had said in the penultimate stanza, —

> "God, give us peace! — not such as lulls to sleep,
> But sword on thigh, and brow with purpose knit!
> And let our Ship of State to harbor sweep,
> Her ports all up, her battle-lanterns lit,
> And her leashed thunders gathering for their leap!"

And then,

> "So cried I, with clenched hands and passionate pain,
> Thinking of dear ones by Potomac's side:

[1] It was very likely after reading this poem that Emerson wrote in his diary, 17 January, 1862: "We will not again disparage America now that we have seen what men it will bear. What a certificate of good elements in the soil, climate, and institutions is Lowell, whose admirable verses I have just read! Such a creature more accredits the land than all the fops of Carolina discredit it."

[2] See *Letters*, i. 318.

> Again the loon laughed mocking, and again
> The echoes bayed far down the night and died,
> While waking I recalled my wandering brain." [1]

There is a single sentence in a letter written four days before the fatal news came which helps to show that side of Lowell's nature out of which his best work sprang, the attitude of receptivity to the large elemental life. Taken in connection with the sudden blow so soon to fall, it enables one to understand better the power by which Lowell was aroused to action: "These last rains have been *lifting* the leaves (si levan le foglie) with a vengeance, making as clean work as ever Highland Cateran with cattle. I can't understand people who call autumn a melancholy season unless they are cockneys indeed. To a country-bred fellow like me, the exquisite atmosphere and the dear associations with nutting and fishing and *trying* to shoot ducks, and lying under warm hillsides, make it anything but sad. Even to see the leaves fall is a pleasure to me which few others match."

Certain it is that from this time there seemed to be a new and, I think, loftier and more sustained spirit in his writing upon the great issues of the day. For one thing, he found vent in a rapid succession of poems which form the second series of the "Biglow Papers." Early in December, 1861, he wrote the first, apparently under pressure to return to this form. "It was clean against my

[1] Eight years later, when writing in his happiest mood the paper "A Good Word for Winter," the memory of these boys came back with the suggestion of snow-forts, and tears trembled in the passage which slipped from his pen.

critical judgment," he writes, "for I don't believe in resuscitations — we hear no good of the *posthumous* Lazarus — but I may get into the vein and do some good;" and it is clear that the effort did seat him again in the saddle, for he followed his first paper, which appeared in January, 1862, with five more in successive months, which were in effect pungent comments on the course of events in that dark period. He had apparently the stimulus of an engagement with Mr. Fields, the editor of the *Atlantic*, for we find him in August confessing his inability to bring to light another paper which was confined somewhere in his perplexed brain.

Lowell could not of course escape his own shadow cast by the brilliant success of the first series, although fourteen years in a man's memory does not raise such an accumulation of fame as it does in the memory of spectators. He was doubtless a bit nervous as he essayed to repeat an earlier impromptu, for such the first series may fairly be called, but the nervousness really attacked only the beginning of his effort; once he was fairly under way, the old assurance all came back, and it was easy enough to indulge in that vernacular which was so imbedded in his early consciousness as to be not an acquisition but an inheritance. The Yankee dialect and macaronics, both of which were the lingo of his boyhood, were so native to his wit that he handled them in maturity as freely as one's hand grasps in a return to the country the scythe which has been swung in boyhood.

It is perhaps more to the point to observe that, as in the earlier series, the figures of this pastoral had been developed from suddenly designed sketches until they stood full formed to the reader in the resultant book, now, upon the resumption of the art, they became simply accepted types to be illustrated rather than developed ; and there is therefore from the start a firmness of touch and a solidity of modelling which give to the entire series an air of certainty and ease, as if the author had no need to add or rub out. There is possibly a little loss of buoyancy and spontaneity, but if so there is compensation in the touch of wisdom and especially of deep feeling characteristic of the series as a whole. Lowell is so sure of the rustic form he is using, and of the old-fashioned pedantry of Mr. Wilbur, that he can draw more confidently from deeper soundings, as indeed the very growth of his own nature compels him to do. Thus, while the satire of the earlier series is more amusing, that of the second is more biting. For when he was dealing with the iniquities of the Mexican war, he was after all contemplating what might be deemed a cutaneous disease as compared with the deadly virus now attacking the most vital part of the national body, and, moreover, fourteen years of personal experience such as he had known could scarcely fail to give him more penetration.

There are one or two surface indications of all this which may be noticed. Thus, though the Reverend Homer Wilbur of the second series is the same serene, absconding sort of parson as in

the first, now and then Lowell forgets the impersonation and speaks in his own voice. This is especially observable in the second of the papers. What Mr. Wilbur says there respecting the English and their criticism of America can scarcely be distinguished in manner from Lowell's own utterances in prose papers already referred to. And again, in the first number, written when Lowell was freshly grieving over the loss of his nephews, there is a trumpet note in the voice of Mr. Wilbur which is both the perfection of art and the sincerity of feeling. The parson is defending himself against the charge of inconsistency in allowing his youngest son to raise a company for the war. He refers with characteristic complacency to the example he himself had set by serving as a chaplain in the war of 1812, and adds: "It was, indeed, grievous to send my Benjamin, the child of my old age; but after the discomfiture of Manassas, I with my own hands did buckle on his armor, trusting in the great Comforter and Commander for strength according to my need. For truly the memory of a brave son dead in his shroud were a greater staff of my declining years than a living coward (if those may be said to have lived who carry all of themselves into the grave with them), though his days might be long in the land, and he should get much goods. It is not till our earthen vessels are broken that we find and truly possess the treasure that was laid up in them."

It is possible that Lowell took a little alarm when he read over the prose introduction to his

second paper, for thereafter there is a studied care to make Mr. Wilbur speak in his own measured tones, even to an indulgence in the introduction to the fifth paper in a piece of most elaborate nonsense mocking the antiquary's enthusiasm. The manner, at last, in which Mr. Wilbur's death is announced, the bringing upon the scenes for obituary purposes of his colleague the Reverend Jedu-thun Hitchcock, who is deliciously discriminated from his senior yet shown to have been formed out of the same clay, the posthumous sayings from Mr. Wilbur's Table Talk, — all this is conceived in a most sympathetic and genuine spirit of art. The delineation of old age, indeed, in this character was, one may guess, something more than artistic imagining. There is a bit of nonsense which Lowell wrote to Miss Norton in 1864, which for its full effect ought to be reproduced in facsimile, for he took the most elaborate pains to transform his hand into that of a poor trembling old nonagenarian: "Since I lost my last tooth, I am a great deal more comfortable, I thank you. The new sett maide for me Doctor Tucker's great granson works well and I eat comfortable. Let me recommend Tinto's hair dyes. It makes all black to be sure, and you look like your fotograms. My palsy hardly troubles me at all now. My memory is as good as it ever was, and my hand-writing as good as in my earliest years. I wrote a little poem last week which Fanny thinks as good as anything I ever did. It begins

> Let dogs delight to bark and bite
> For 't is *their* nature, too.

But I don't think she hears very well with her new trumpet.

"Certainly I will dine with you on Sunday and shall expect you on Thursday if Tuesday should be a fair day. The death of Holmes is an awful warning, but one can't expect to be very strong at ninety nine. I remember his mother who died near fifty years ago."

The fun we make often discloses the gravity that lies behind, as if we could exorcise a spirit by jesting at it, and Lowell was tormented, strange to say, by the apprehension of old age long before he approached it. There is, therefore, something pathetic as well as humorous in the fragment of Mr. Wilbur's letter which introduces the "Latest Views of Mr. Biglow." It is the imitation palsy again, and yet behind Mr. Wilbur's tremulous phrases one reads those strong convictions which Lowell held to throughout the perplexing days before Gettysburg. "Though I believe Slavery," Mr. Wilbur says, "to have been the cause of it [the war] by so thoroughly demoralizing Northern politicks for its own purposes as to give opportunity and hope to treason, yet I would not have our thought and purpose diverted from their true object, — the maintenance of the idea of Government. We are not merely suppressing an enormous riot, but contending for the possibility of permanent order coexisting with democratical fickleness; and while I would not superstitiously venerate form to the sacrifice of substance, neither would I forget that an adherence to precedent and

prescription can alone give that continuity and coherence under a democratic constitution which are inherent in the person of a despotick monarch and the selfishness of an aristocratical class. *Stet pro ratione voluntas* is as dangerous in a majority as in a tyrant."

Distinct as are the judgments of Mr. Wilbur, it is after all in the poems from Hosea Biglow and his foil Birdofredom Sawin that we get the freest and most luminous expression of Lowell's mind. He began the new series in a low key by recounting the experience of the renegade Yankee during the years since the Mexican war, but the affair of the Trent happened immediately after he had written the first paper, and before completing Birdofredom's story he dashed off that quaint fable of the dialogue between the Bridge and the Monument, ending with the verses "Jonathan to John," which was a genuine delivery of his mind. "If I am not mistaken," he wrote to Mr. Fields on sending it, "it will *take*. 'T is about Mason and Slidell, and I have ended it with a refrain that I hope has a kind of *tang* to it." The judgments which he passed in it were not momentary impulses. Three years later he wrote a letter[1] which repeats in prose much the same sentiments. It would be difficult to find a better exponent than Lowell of the temper of educated Americans toward England, a temper which discriminates sharply between the England of history and of personal affection and the England that registered in the nineteenth cen-

[1] *Letters*, i. 343.

tury the prejudices of a lingering bureaucratic régime.

In the third, fourth, and fifth papers Lowell used his satire effectively to sting his countrymen into a perception of the meaner side of politics, for his incessant cry throughout his political career was for independence and idealism, and the obverse was an unfailing denunciation of shams and cowardly truckling to popular views. It was when he came to the close of the six numbers which he appears to have agreed to write that he gave himself up to the luxury of that bobolink song which always swelled in his throat when spring melted into summer. "Sunthin' in the Pastoral Line," like the opening notes of "The Vision of Sir Launfal," like "Under the Willows," "Al Fresco," and similar poems, is the insistent call of Nature which is perhaps the most unmistakable witness in Lowell of a voice most his own because least subject to his own volition. To be sure, Lowell had a truth he wished to press, — the need of crushing the rattlesnake in its head of slavery; but he must needs first clear his throat by a long sweet draught of nature, and the mingling of pure delight in out of doors with the perplexities of the hour renders this number of the "Biglow Papers" one that goes very straight to the reader's heart.

There is no flagging in this monthly succession, as one reads the "Papers" now, but Lowell hated the compulsory business of a poem a month, — as he says in this latest number: —

> "I thought ef this 'ere milkin' o' the wits
> So much a month, war n't givin' Natur' fits, —
> Ef folks war n't druv, findin' their own milk fail,
> To work the cow that hez an iron tail,
> An' ef idees 'thout ripenin' in the pan
> Would send up cream to humor ary man."

And he wrote to Fields, 5 June, 1862: "It 's no use. I reverse the gospel difficulty, and while the flesh is willing enough, the spirit is weak. My brain must lie fallow a spell, — there is no superphosphate for those worn-out fields. Better no crop than small potatoes. I want to have the *passion* of the thing on me again and beget lusty Biglows. I am all the more dejected because you have treated me so well. But I must rest awhile. My brain is out of kilter." And again in August he wrote to the same: "Give me a victory and I will give you a poem: but I am now clear down in the bottom of the well, where I see the Truth too near to make verses of."

So it was six months before he wrote again, this time the "Latest Views of Mr. Biglow." He carried out his plan, after this interval, of putting an end to Mr. Wilbur. The verses repeat his impatience for some action, some great leader, but at the close he bursts forth into exultation over Lincoln's proclamation of emancipation. And then, for two years and more, Hosea keeps silence.

Yet if victory did not arouse him, the greater theme of sacrifice called out one of his most solemn and stirring odes, that dedicated to the memory of Robert Gould Shaw, and entitled "Memoriæ Positum R. G. Shaw." It may well be read in

connection with the other poem suggested by the events of the war in 1863, "Two Scenes from the Life of Blondel." There is in this parable a half confession of failure, a reflection upon ideals once held gallantly and then trailed in the dust of disappointment. He seems to have written the first scene, in which Lincoln is the ideal captain, without at first designing the second, for he writes to Mr. Fields, who already had the first: "I have written a Palinode to 'Blondel,' and so made two poems of it. The latter half is half-humorous and, I think, will help the effect. You see how dangerous it is to pay a poet handsomely beforehand. I don't know where I shall stop. I shall be sending an epic presently. . . . I should like your notion of the second part of Blondel, which (in the first relief of incubation) I am inclined to think clever. But there was nothing wiser than Horace's ninth year — only it overwhelms us like a ninth wave (that 's Wendell's, *tenth* the Latins said, but I wanted nine), and if we kept our verses so long we should print none of them. A strong argument for monthly magazines, you see." There is so little of the essentially dramatic about Lowell's poetry that it is not unfair to hear his voice only slightly changed in such a poem as this. But all such speculative and half-moody expressions gave way before the dignity of Shaw's death. "I would rather have my name known and blest, as his will be," Lowell writes to Colonel Shaw's mother, "through all the hovels of an outcast race, than blaring from all the trumpets of repute." And

the ultimate judgment which he held, despite the confusion wrought by all the meaner passions of the time which vext his soul, rings out clearly in the final lines: —

> "Dear Land, whom triflers now make bold to scorn,
> (Thee! from whose forehead Earth awaits her morn,)
> How nobler shall the sun
> Flame in thy sky, how braver breathe thy air,
> That thou bred'st children who for thee couldst dare
> And die as thine have done!" [1]

For the one note, in the discord of the war, heard more and more clearly by Lowell, was that of triumph for democracy as incarnate in his country. No one can read his writings from this time forward without observing how deep a passion this love of his country was. In earlier life he had had a passion for Freedom, and the Freedom which was to him as the Lady to her knight, was very comprehensive and took many forms. Now, in his maturity, and when he saw the one great blot fading from the escutcheon, there was a steady concentration of passion upon that incorporation of freedom in the fair land which seemed to his imagination to have gotten her soul, and no longer Earth's biggest country, but to have

> "risen up Earth's greatest nation."

[1] In an interesting letter to J. B. Thayer (*Letters*, ii. 191), Lowell says, comparing his odes with those of Gray and Coleridge: "All these were written for the closet — and mine for recitation. I chose my measures with my ears open. So I did in writing the poem on Rob Shaw. That *is* regular because meant only to be read, and because also I thought it should have in the form of its stanza something of the formality of an epitaph."

The "Biglow Papers" had appeared in the *Atlantic*. There also had been printed his "Blondel" and "Memoriæ Positum R. G. Shaw;" but since the article in December, 1861, "Self-Possession *vs.* Prepossession," and another in January, 1863,[1] he had not made that magazine the vehicle for prose articles on public affairs, as had been his practice during his editorship of it. Now, at the close of 1863, he entered upon an engagement which was to give him a new medium for communication, and one which he used effectively for the next ten years. The *North American Review*, which had been founded by a number of cultivated gentlemen in Boston in 1815, was modelled on the famous quarterlies of Great Britain, and had for fifty years been the leading representative in America of dignified scholarship and literature. At times it had been spirited and aggressive, but for the most part it had stood rather for elegant leisure and a somewhat remote criticism. For the last ten years it had been conducted in a temperate and careful way by the Rev. Dr. Andrew P. Peabody, who held by the old traditions. But its fortunes were at a low ebb, it no longer was a power, and the publishers, hoping to reinstate it in authority, applied to Lowell to take charge of it. He saw the opportunity it would give him, and he accepted the offer, but only on condition that Mr. Norton should be associated with him as active editor. The advertisement put forth by the publishers was such as to quiet the minds of any who might

[1] "In the Halfway House."

be uneasy over a change of conduct; for, after naming the new editors, it characterized them as "gentlemen who, for sound and elegant scholarship, have achieved an enviable reputation, both in this country and in Europe; and whose taste, education, and experience eminently qualify them for the position they have assumed. Of the former it may be said that his essays in the periodical which, under his editorship, reached the summit of its fame, surpassed in vigor and force those of any contributor; of the latter, that he has 'added new honors to the name he bears by the extent and variety of his knowledge, and by the force and elegance which he has exhibited both as a writer and a speaker.' And of both, that their thorough loyalty to the liberal institutions of our country, and their sympathy with the progressive element of the times, renders them peculiarly fitted to conduct the *Review*, which has by competent authority been pronounced 'the leading literary organ of the country,' and of which it has been said 'it has not its equal in America, nor its superior in the world.'" The advertisement continued in measured phrases to announce the policy of the review, and it would have been difficult for its old subscribers to detect any promise of change, though as a matter of fact, while the term scholarly could equally well be applied to it in the next ten years, the scholarship was more exact, the scope of the review was greatly widened, and for pungency and thoroughness of criticism, for good English and for breadth of view, it was so strikingly marked, that it became a signal ex-

ample of how a magazine may at once be lifted to a higher level without being compelled to turn a somersault.

The advertisement, however, which Crosby & Nichols put forth no doubt with a dignified elation, excited Lowell's ire, and he gave vent to his annoyance in a rhymed letter to his colleague : —

"Dear Charles, —

I am mad as a piper
And could bite those old files like a viper,
Reading their d—d advertisement
For donkeys, and not for the wise, meant,
(Which undoubtedly tickles
Messrs. Crosby and Nichols
To the innermost jecur
Or brain — where they 're weaker!)
I feel as if the rogues meant to work us
Like the clowns of a travelling circus,
Blowing their trumpets before us
In a brazen and asinine chorus,
Sending advance troops of blackguards
To blear all the fences with placards, —
'This is the famous Dan Rice, sirs,
Whose jokes are beyond any price, sirs,
And this is that eminent man Joe
Grimes, so sublime on the banjo,
And especially great in the prances
Of the best Ethiopian dances!'
Why, I feel my shamed visage o'erdarkle
With my last evening's waterproof charcoal!
Dear Charles, all your articles toss by
And see Messrs. Nichols and Crosby:
Curl up your moustache like a bandit
And tell 'em we never will stand it
To be treated (I put here one *more* curse)
Like a couple of literate porkers
(Nay, a literate one would much rather
Be made into pork like his father.)
I 'd go, but must hurry to college

To help the confusion of knowledge,
So remain
Your true friend, as you know well,
!!!! 'The world famous James Russell Lowell
Shuperior every way vastly
To the late justly-favorite Astley!!!!'"

Though Mr. Norton took the laboring oar in editing, Lowell put in his stroke now and then, as may be seen in a letter to Mr. Motley asking for a contribution.[1] In that he sets forth the situation in a few sentences: "You have heard," he says, "that Norton and I have undertaken to edit the *North American*, — a rather Sisyphian job, you will say. It wanted three chief elements to be successful. It was n't thoroughly, that is, thickly and thinly, loyal, it was n't lively, and it had no particular opinions on any particular subject. It was an eminently safe periodical, and accordingly was in great danger of running aground. It was an easy matter, of course, to make it loyal, — even to give it opinions (such as they were), but to make it alive is more difficult. Perhaps the day of the quarterlies is gone by, and those megatheria of letters may be in the mere course of nature withdrawing to their last swamps to die in peace. Anyhow, here we are with our megatherium on our hands, and we must strive to find what will fill his huge belly, and keep him alive a little longer."

That this and similar letters were not so much evidence of Lowell's energetic assumption of editorial tasks as special efforts coaxed out of him

[1] See *Correspondence of J. L. Motley*, ii. 167. Copied in *Letters*, i. 334.

by his associate, may be inferred from a letter to Mr. Norton written three days later, in which he begins: "It is abominable that you should have been gone a whole month without a letter from me, — and yet so wholly in accordance with natural laws that you must be pleased when I explain the reason of my silence. That I have thought of you I need not say. Well, do you understand the nature of a cask, and accordingly the analogous human nature of a 'vessel of wrath?' A cask has a bung which is kept tight, and a spigot through which it delights to unbosom itself into the can for refreshment or mirth. But this is not all. It may be never so small, — a needle might stop it, — but *if* stopped, not a drop shall you coax out of the faucet for love or money. Now when I read your letter, walking in the hot sun along the side of the graveyard, I was full of good liquor reaming ripe to flow for you. But you bound me by a vow to write to Motley ere I wrote to you, and in so doing hermetically sealed the vent, and locked up all my vintage in myself. I could have written to *you*, but Motley was another thing. And first came Commencement, then Phi Beta, then the making of my salt hay, and at last I got it done and a letter also to Howells."

But if Lowell shirked the drudgery of editing he gave what was much more worth while to the *Review* in his frequent contributions. During the remainder of the war, and during the early stages of the reconstruction period, he had in nearly every number a political article. The new editors issued

their first number in January, 1864, and Lowell took for his subject "The President's Policy." The last direct public expression he had given of his estimate of Mr. Lincoln was in his *Atlantic* article in December, 1861. Two years had passed since that time and the question was now looming up of the election of Mr. Lincoln's successor. The election was to be held in November, 1864, and the four articles which Lowell wrote in the quarterly numbers of that year are all practically arguments for the reëlection of Mr. Lincoln. The January article, combined (with some confusion of tenses) with what he wrote after the President's death, now appears under the title "Abraham Lincoln," in "Political Essays." The estimate of the President, made for the most part when Lincoln was under fire, not only from his political opponents, but from those who might be expected to support him, is a clear appreciation of those great qualities of patience and balance of mind which have come to be recognized as the source of his strength. Lowell, as we have seen, had not at the outset refrained from a critical attitude toward Lincoln. Now he confesses his own blunder and throws the confession into the scales when weighing him. "Mr. Lincoln, as it seems to us in reviewing his career, though we have sometimes in our impatience thought otherwise, has always waited, as a wise man should, till the right moment brought up all his reserves;" and he reads well a prime element of Lincoln's power when he makes distinction between the conscientiously rigid *doctrinaire* and

the statesman who achieves his triumph by quietly accomplishing his ends. "Mr. Lincoln's perilous task has been to carry a rather shaky raft through the rapids, making fast the unrulier logs as he could snatch opportunity, and the country is to be congratulated that he did not think it his duty to run straight at all hazards, but cautiously to assure himself with his setting pole where the main current was, and keep steadily to that. He is still in wild water, but we have faith that his skill and sureness of eye will bring him out right at last." What especially bound Lincoln's policy to Lowell's confidence was the fact that its pole-star was national integrity, and in tracing as he does the slow process by which the President carried the nation with him till the abolition of slavery became no longer the cry of a party but the logical necessity of a nation, he practically unfolds the process of his own development.[2]

In the April number of the *North American* Lowell took for his text General McClellan's Report, and applied his powers of analysis to this for the purpose of constructing the figure of Lincoln's opponent. McClellan was no longer in the field, but he was the military critic of the administration

[1] In a letter written to Mr. R. W. Gilder, 7 February, 1887, Lowell says: "I spent the night with my friend Norton last Wednesday. There I found a pile of the N. A. R. . . . By the way the January, '64, number was 'second edition.' I fancy the old lady making her best curtsey at being thus called out before the footlights. The article was reprinted as a political tract and largely circulated. Lincoln wrote a letter to the publishers which I forgot to look for."

and the man about whom the forces in opposition were gradually collecting, since he seemed to have been thrown up for this purpose by the elements which were most active. McClellan's report, which had recently appeared, covered the period from July, 1861, to November, 1862, a period which in the rapid progress of events was already historical and could be examined in the light of later movements. To McClellan, however, the Report was an *apologia pro vita sua*, and nothing had happened since it was written, so essentially was he a critic rather than a creator. Lowell was quick to see the weakness of McClellan's position in defending himself, preliminary to assuming a position where he was to defend the country, and in making his defence issue in charges against the authority under whose orders he had acted. He saw not so much the politician under the soldier's cloak as a man of such calibre as fitted him to become the tool of politicians, and so self-conscious that once he is possessed of the notion of his political importance he looks at everything from a personal point of view. The Report gave abundant evidence of this, and Lowell follows him through the narrative, not as a military critic but as a student of human nature, and in his summary asks the very pertinent question if a man of this make-up is a man to put at the head of affairs. "Though we think," he says, "great injustice has been done by the public to General McClellan's really high merit as an officer, yet it seems to us that those very merits show precisely the character of intel-

lect to unfit him for the task just now demanded of a statesman. His capacity for organization may be conspicuous; but be it what it may, it is one thing to bring order out of the confusion of mere inexperience, and quite another to retrieve it from a chaos of elements mutually hostile, which is the problem sure to present itself to the next administration. This will constantly require precisely that judgment on the nail, and not to be drawn for at three days' sight, of which General McClellan has shown least. Is our path to be so smooth for the next four years that a man whose leading characteristic is an exaggeration of difficulties is likely to be our surest guide? . . . The man who is fit for the office of President in these times should be one who knows how to advance, an art which General McClellan has never learned."

In the July number Lowell recurs more distinctly to the fundamental questions involved in the war, since his task is to place in comparison two historical works issuing from opposite sides, Pollard's initial volume of "The Southern History of the War," devoted to the first year, and the first volume of Greeley's treatise, "The American Conflict." As these two, and more especially the latter, naturally set about accounting for the war, Lowell makes them the text for his article, "The Rebellion: its Causes and Consequences." The breadth of the theme tempts him into an introductory discussion of the several modes of writing history, and an inquiry into the spirit in which history in the making should be interpreted, but

his real business, when he gets at it, is to examine the political character of the nation at the breaking out of the war, and to trace the insidious influence of slavery on national politics. He repeats in newer and more forcible phrases the contention, so often made by him, that the corruption of government had been going on steadily under this subtle solvent, and that the hope of the nation was in the extinction of so disturbing an element. He applies the truth to the political situation in the approaching election, and warns the South that "there is no party at the North, considerable in numbers or influence, which could come into power on the platform of making peace with the Rebels on their own terms. No party can get possession of the government which is not in sympathy with the temper of the people, and the people, forced into war against their will by the unprovoked attack of pro-slavery bigotry, are resolved on pushing it to its legitimate conclusion. War means now, consciously with many, unconsciously with most, but inevitably, abolition. . . . If the war be waged manfully, as becomes a thoughtful people, without insult or childish triumph in success, if we meet opinion with wiser opinion, waste no time in badgering prejudice till it becomes hostility, and attack slavery as a crime against the nation, and not as individual sin, it will end, we believe, in making us the most powerful and prosperous community the world ever saw."

Though he wrote hopefully in his public articles, Lowell's letters show alternations of hope and

discouragement, and intimate how much the war disturbed his peace of mind. He wrote to Mr. Norton, midway between the July and October numbers: "I shall say nothing about politics, my dear Charles, for I feel rather down in the mouth, and moreover I have not had an idea so long that I should not know one if I saw it. The war and its constant expectation and anxiety oppress me. I cannot think. If I had enough to leave behind me, I could enlist this very day and get knocked in the head. I hear bad things about Mr. Lincoln and try not to believe them."

In July the two candidates for the presidency had not been formally named, but when Lowell came to prepare his article for the October number, which would appear on the eve of the election, the contest was at its height, though events were rapidly throwing their votes against the losing party. Lowell makes capital use of this fact in his article "McClellan or Lincoln?" which gains in wit through the evident elation which possesses the writer over the almost certain results. He had written Motley at the end of July: "My own feeling has always been confident, and it is now hopeful. If Mr. Lincoln is re-chosen, I think the war will soon be over. . . . So far as I can see, the opposition to Mr. Lincoln is both selfish and factious, but it is much in favor of the right side that the Democratic party have literally not so much as a single plank of principle to float on, and the sea runs high. They don't know what they are in favor of — hardly what they think it safe to be

against. And I doubt if they gain much by going into an election on negatives." By a series of eliminations, he leaves, in his article, the single point of difference between the policy of Lincoln and that which McClellan, according to his own showing, would pursue, namely, the policy of conciliation concerning which McClellan made loud protestations; and then he proceeds to riddle that assumption. The article, however, is interesting chiefly for another summary of Lowell's judgment of Lincoln: —

"Mr. Lincoln, in our judgment, has shown from the first the considerate wisdom of a practical statesman. If he has been sometimes slow in making up his mind, it has saved him the necessity of being hasty to change it when once made up, and he has waited till the gradual movement of the popular sentiment should help him to his conclusions and sustain him in them. To be moderate and unimpassioned in revolutionary times that kindle natures of a more flimsy texture, may not be a romantic quality, but it is a rare one, and goes with those massive understandings on which a solid structure of achievement may be reared. Mr. Lincoln is a long-headed and long-purposed man, who knows when he is ready, — a secret General McClellan never learned. . . . We have seen no reason to change our opinion of Mr. Lincoln since his wary scrupulousness won him the applause of one party, or his decided action, when he was at last convinced of its necessity, made him the momentary idol of the other. We will not call him a

great man, for over-hasty praise is too apt to sour at last into satire, and greatness may be trusted safely to history and the future; but an honest one we believe him to be, and with no aim save to repair the glory and the greatness of his country."

The reëlection of Lincoln with a convincing majority, and the rapid crushing of the shell of the Confederacy, conspired at once to give Lowell a spirit of exultation, tempered with profound regret, and a keen interest in the results of the war. The one mood appears in the striking paper on "Reconstruction" which he contributed to the *North American* for April, 1865, the other in the new "Biglow Paper" which he contributed to the *Atlantic* for the same month. The latter was written earlier and apparently was drawn out of him by the golden persuasion of Mr. Fields, for we find Lowell writing him 2 February, 1865, when he sends him No. X. of the "Biglow Papers," "Mr. Hosea Biglow to the Editor of the Atlantic Monthly:"

"You pulled the string of this cold shower-bath, so you can't complain. But if you don't like it, I am willing to take back my machine. If on the other hand you *do*, — and if you don't, by Jove, count on my undying hate, — why, suppose you send me the canvas — greenback, I mean, *before* you print it. This would give us both a sensation which is desirable in a world where an Emperor offered a kingdom for a new one. Remember in future that asking poets for verses is almost as fatal as asking them to read them. 'Thyself art the cause of this anguish.' *Item.* I have been

mulling over a fairy story, of which something may come and something may not.[1] I begin to suspect the egg *may* be chalk. I have heard of such things. Even the muses in this degenerate age have learned to sophisticate. The devil tempts me to tell you I have also a novel in progress, and an epic poem and a tragedy — also a satire in which those who don't like the foregoing are ground to powder. But I have scared you enough for once, and I really have n't begun one of 'em, unless it may be the tragedy which one goes on composing all his life."

The ground-swell of emotion which stirs the verses written in that winter of 1865, just before spring came, and when the buds of peace were already beginning to open, is expressive of that strong personal feeling which entered into Lowell's measure of the sacrifice which had been made when he reckoned on the great gain that was to accrue to the nation. Poetry, and especially that cast in a homely mould, was his vent for this feeling. He rarely showed emotion in his prose, but in the article which he wrote a few weeks later when the end was just in sight, he discloses in another way, and almost as strongly, the depth of his nature, for in this article on "Reconstruction" there is scarcely any of that play of wit which marks his earlier political papers.

> "Come, while our country feels the lift
> Of a gret instinct shoutin' 'Forwards!'"

[1] The fairy story was "Gold-Egg: a Dream Fantasy," which appeared in the *Atlantic* for May, 1865.

Hosea Biglow had just sung with tearful eyes and firm set lips, and Lowell's whole nature seemed to rise in an eager desire to grapple with the great problem which was to confront the nation as soon as the last gun had been fired. The quiet, stately opening of the subject as he recounts with deep pride the attitude of the country, and the splendid attestation it had given of the staying power of democracy, is followed by a close examination of the main lines of policy to be followed in the reconstruction of the insurgent states. "We did not enter," he says, "upon war to open a new market, or fresh fields for speculators, or an outlet for redundant population, but to save the experiment of democracy from destruction, and put it in a fairer way of success by removing the single disturbing element. Our business now is not to allow ourselves to be turned aside from a purpose which our experience thus far has demonstrated to have been as wise as it was necessary, and to see to it that, whatever be the other conditions of reconstruction, democracy, which is our real strength, receive no detriment."

Hence, after some wise words regarding the treatment of the governing class at the South, and a penetrating exposition of the relation between these and the non-slaveholding class, he applies himself most closely to a study of the situation as regards the blacks, with the conclusion that the prime necessity is to make them land-holders and to give them the ballot. There are some sentences which have a mournful sound read to-day, thirty-

five years after the discussion. "We believe the white race, by their intellectual and traditional superiority, will retain sufficient ascendancy to prevent any serious mischief from the new order of things." "As to any prejudices which should prevent the two races from living together, it would soon yield to interest and necessity." He is aware of the difficulties which beset the subject, but he contends that the large way is the only way. "If we are to try the experiment of democracy fairly, it must be tried in its fullest extent, and not halfway. . . . The opinion of the North is made up on the subject of emancipation, and Mr. Lincoln has announced it as the one essential preliminary to the readmission of the insurgent States. To our mind, citizenship is the necessary consequence, as it is the only effectual warranty, of freedom; and accordingly we are in favor of distinctly settling beforehand some conditional right of admission to it. We have purposely avoided any discussion on gradualism as an element in emancipation, because we consider its evil results to have been demonstrated in the British West Indies. True conservative policy is not an anodyne hiding away our evil from us in a brief forgetfulness. It looks to the long future of a nation, and dares the heroic remedy where it is scientifically sure of the nature of the disease."

Then came the triumphant close in the surrender of Lee, and he writes to Mr. Norton: "The news, my dear Charles, is from Heaven. I felt a strange and tender exaltation. I wanted to laugh and I

wanted to cry, and ended by holding my peace and feeling devoutly thankful. There is something magnificent in having a country to love. It is almost like what one feels for a woman. Not so tender, perhaps, but to the full as self-forgetful. I worry a little about reconstruction, but am inclined to think that matters will very much settle themselves." He closed his political articles of the war period with one in July, entitled "Scotch the Snake, or kill it?" which is in a lighter vein than "Reconstruction," and is in its way a quick survey of the underlying character of the great contest, suggested by an examination of that scrapbook of the war, Frank Moore's *The Rebellion Record*. This mirror gives so many varied reflections that Lowell writes a little at random, making felicitous comments, but coming back, as so often before, to the paramount question of slavery and the treatment of the negro. As the title of his article intimates, he contends for a radical solution of the problem. "The more thought we bestow on the matter, the more thoroughly are we persuaded that the only way to get rid of the negro is to do him justice. Democracy is safe because it is just, and safe only when it is just to all. Here is no question of white or black, but simply of man. We have hitherto been strong in proportion as we dared be true to the sublime thought of our own Declaration of Independence, which for the first time proposed to embody Christianity in human laws, and announced the discovery that the security of the state is based on the moral instinct and the manhood of its members."

The character of the work he was noticing led him at the beginning of his paper into some reflections on the part played by newspapers in modern times, and the stimulus given to national sensitiveness by the quick transmission of news. "It is no trifling matter," he says, "that thirty millions of men should be thinking the same thought and feeling the same pang at a single moment of time, and that these vast parallels of latitude should become a neighborhood more intimate than many a country village. The dream of Human Brotherhood seems to be coming true at last. The peasant who dipped his net in the Danube, or trapped the beaver on its banks, perhaps never heard of Cæsar, or of Cæsar's murder; but the shot that shattered the forecasting brain, and curdled the warm, sweet heart of the most American of Americans, echoed along the wires through the length and breadth of a continent, swelling all eyes at once with tears of indignant sorrow. Here was a tragedy fulfilling the demands of Aristotle, and purifying with an instantaneous throb of pity and terror a theatre of such proportions as the world never saw. We doubt if history ever recorded an event so touching and awful as this sympathy, so wholly emancipated from the toils of space and time that it might seem as if earth were really sentient, as some have dreamed, or the great god Pan alive again to make the hearts of nations stand still with his shout. What is Beethoven's 'Funeral March for the Death of a Hero' to the symphony of love, pity, and wrathful resolve which the telegraph of

that April morning played on the pulses of a nation?"

It was perhaps with one of these phrases lingering in his mind that he characterized Lincoln a few weeks later when he came to write his Ode recited at the Harvard Commemoration. This commemoration was held by Harvard College, 21 July, 1865, in honor of its sons who had died in the war. Lowell was asked to write a poem for the occasion, and he has given in a letter written a score of years later, to Mr. Gilder, a bit of reminiscence respecting its composition. "The ode itself," he says, "was an improvisation. Two days before the commemoration I had told my friend Child that it was impossible — that I was dull as a door-mat. But the next day something gave me a jog, and the whole thing came out of me with a rush. I sat up all night writing it out clear, and took it on the morning of the day to Child. 'I have something but don't yet know what it is, or whether it will do. Look at it and tell me.' He went a little way apart with it under an elm-tree in the College yard. He read a passage here and there, brought it back to me, and said 'Do? I should think so! Don't you be scared!' And I was n't, but virtue enough had gone out of me to make me weak for a fortnight after." Something of this reaction appears in a letter to Miss Norton, written four days after the delivery of the poem: "I eat and smoke and sleep and go through all the nobler functions of a man mechanically still, and wonder at myself as at something outside of

and alien to me. For have I not worked myself lean on an 'Ode for Commemoration?' Was I not so rapt with the fervor of conception as I have not been these ten years, losing my sleep, my appetite, and my flesh, those attributes to which I before alluded as nobly uniting us in a common nature with our kind? Did I not for two days exasperate everybody that came near me by reciting passages in order to try them on? Did I not even fall backward and downward to the old folly of hopeful youth, and think I had written something *really* good at last? And am I not now enduring those retributive dumps which ever follow such sinful exaltations, the Erynnyes of Vanity? Did not I make John Holmes and William Story shed tears by my recitation of it (my ode) in the morning, both of 'em fervently declaring it was 'noble'? Did not even the silent Rowse declare 't was in a higher mood than much or most of later verse? Did not I think, in my nervous exhilaration, that 't would be *the* feature (as reporters call it) of the day? And, after all, have I not a line in the *Daily Advertiser* calling it a 'graceful poem' (or 'some graceful verses' I forget which), which 'was received with applause?' Why, Jane, my legs are those of grasshoppers, and my head is an autumn threshing-floor, still beating with the alternate flails of strophe and antistrophe, and an infinite virtue is gone out of me somehow — but it seems *not* into my verse as I dreamed. Well, well, Charles will like it — but then he always does, so what 's the use? I am Icarus now,

The Sower.

I saw a Sower walking slow
Across the Earth, from East to West;
His hair was white as mountain snow,
His head drooped forward on his breast.

With shrivelled hands he flung his seed,
Nor ever turned to look behind;
Of sight or sound he took no heed;
It seemed he was both deaf & blind.

His dim face showed no soul beneath,
Yet in my heart I felt a stir
As if I looked upon the Wraith
That once had clasped Excalibur.

with the cold, salt sea over him instead of the warm exulting blue of ether. I am gone under, and I never will be a fool again. . . . Like a boy, I mistook my excitement for inspiration, and here I am in the mud. You see, also, I am a little disappointed and a little few (un petit peu) vexed. I did *not* make the hit I expected, and am ashamed at having been again tempted into thinking I could write *poetry*, a delusion from which I have been tolerably free these dozen years." [1]

There was one other comment made by Lowell on the ode which confirms these impressions and adds a little to the record of his experience in writing it. It occurs in a letter to J. B. Thayer, 8 December, 1868, upon the occasion of a review by Mr. Thayer of the volume of verse just published in which the ode was included: "I am not sure if I understand what you say about the tenth strophe. You will observe that it leads naturally to the eleventh, and that I there justify a certain

[1] *Letters of James Russell Lowell*, i. 345, 346. Copyrighted 1893, by Harper & Brothers. Mrs. S. B. Herrick, whose friendship with Lowell will be referred to later, writes: "I was speaking to Mrs. Lowell of my strong admiration for its fire and eloquence, and she told me that after Mr. Lowell had agreed to deliver the poem on that occasion, he had tried in vain to write it. The last evening before the date fixed, he said to her: 'I must write this poem to-night. Go to bed and do not let me feel that I am keeping you up, and I shall be more at ease.' He began it at ten o'clock. At four in the morning he came to her door and said: 'It is done and I am going to sleep now.' She opened her eyes to see him standing haggard, actually wasted by the stress of labor and the excitement which had carried him through a poem full of passion and fire, of 523 lines in the space of six hours."

narrowness in it as an expression of the popular feeling as well as my own. I confess I have never got over the feeling of wrath with which (just after the death of my nephew Willie) I read in an English paper that nothing was to be hoped of an army officered by tailors' apprentices and butcher boys. The poem was written with a vehement speed, which I thought I had lost in the skirts of my professor's gown. Till within two days of the celebration I was hopelessly dumb, and then it all came with a rush, literally making me lean (mi fece magro), and so nervous that I was weeks in getting over it. I was longer in getting the new (eleventh) strophe to my mind than in writing the rest of my poem. In *that* I hardly changed a word, and it was so undeliberate that I did not find out till after it was printed that some of the verses lacked corresponding rhymes.[1] . . . I had put the ethical and political view so often in prose that I was weary of it. The motives of the war? I had impatiently urged them again and again, — but for an ode they must be in the blood and not the memory. One of my great defects (I have always been conscious of it) is an impatience of mind which makes me contemptuously indifferent about arguing matters that have once become convictions."

Once more, in writing to the same correspondent in 1877, with regard to the versification, he says: "My problem was to contrive a measure which

[1] Lowell writes again of this and makes proposed changes and additions in a letter to Col. T. W. Higginson, 28 March, 1867. See *Letters*, i. 379.

should not be tedious by uniformity, which should vary with varying moods, in which the transitions (including those of the voice) should be managed without jar. I at first thought of mixed rhymed and blank verses of unequal measures, like those in the choruses of 'Samson Agonistes,' which are in the main masterly. Of course Milton *deliberately* departed from that stricter form of the Greek Chorus to which it was bound as much (I suspect) by the law of its musical accompaniment as by any sense of symmetry. I wrote some stanzas of the 'Commemoration Ode' on this theory at first, leaving some verses without a rhyme to match. But my ear was better pleased with the rhyme, coming at a longer interval, as a far-off echo, rather than instant reverberation, produced the same effect almost, and yet was grateful by unexpectedly recalling an association and faint reminiscence of consonance."[1]

[1] There was a curious psychical incident connected with the delivery of the Ode which came to light afterward but apparently was not recorded till several years later. The incident is fully set forth in two letters to Dr. William James, which were published in the *Proceedings of the American Society for Psychical Research*, March, 1889, where Dr. Royce printed a "Report of the Committee on Phantasms and Presentiments." The first letter is from the gentleman in whose experience the incident occurred: —

My dear Mr. James, — I passed the night before commemoration day on a lounge in Hollis 21, the room of my college chum H., who had been tutor since our graduation, three years before. I woke (somewhat early, I should say) saying to myself these words: "And what they dare to dream of dare to die for." I was enough awake to notice the appropriateness of the words to the occasion, but was sleepy enough to wonder whether they

The ode did at once assert its high character, yet it must be borne in mind that the very reason

really expressed a lofty thought, or were lofty only in sound. Before I had made up my mind I dropped to sleep again.

In the afternoon I was in about the middle of the tent. Mr. Lowell stood under Hollis at nearly the same table. I heard very distinctly as he read "Those love her best." I felt that something was coming which was familiar, and as he ended the line I felt that I could repeat the next one, and I did so, ahead of him. But as we proceeded I was confounded with the fact that apparently my line would not rhyme with his. As I said "die for," he said "do." I spent some minutes in trying to determine whether I liked his sentiment or mine the most.

That is all. After twenty-one years, details are dim. Some years ago, just before Mr. Lowell sailed for England, I sent him a statement, more detailed probably than this; but no doubt it became carbonic acid and water before he left the house.

The second letter is from Lowell, to whom Mr. W.'s letter had been sent by Dr. James: —

17th Feb., 1888.

Dear Dr. James, — My Commemoration Ode was very rapidly written, and came to me unexpectedly, for I had told Child, who was one of the committee (I suppose), that he must look for nothing from me. I sat up all the night before the ceremony, writing and copying out what I had written during the day. I think most of it was composed on that last day. I have no doubt the verse quoted by Mr. W. came to me in a flash, but whether during that last night or not I cannot say. Perhaps my MS. would show, if I had kept it, or if anybody else has. Child will remember my taking him apart under an elm, between Massachusetts and the Law School, that morning, that I might read him a part of the Ode, to see if it would do, for 't was so fresh that I knew not, having probably not even had time to read it over. It was such a new thing in more senses than one.

I recollect Mr. W.'s letter, and think it was substantially like that to you. I did not burn it, I am sure, and 't will, no doubt, turn up somewhere in my hay-stack of letters when I am "up back of the meetin'-house," as Yankees used to say while there were any Yankees left. . . .

There is one painful suggestion in the fact of Mr. W.'s antici-

of its form acted somewhat against its immediate popularity. It is truly an ode to be recited, and as a chorus depends for its power upon a volume of sound, so this ode needs, to bring out its full value, a great delivery. Lowell himself, always a sympathetic reader, had no such power of recitation as would at once convey to his audience a notion of the stateliness and procession of words which attaches to the ode. The impression of the hour was produced by the spontaneous outpouring of the heart of Phillips Brooks in prayer. "That," says President Eliot, "was the most impressive utterance of a proud and happy day. Even Lowell's Commemoration Ode did not at the moment so touch the hearts of his hearers; that one spontaneous and intimate expression of Brooks's noble spirit convinced all Harvard men that a young prophet had risen up in Israel." [1]

Lowell's explanation of the form of the ode is significant. So native to him was the most genuine literary spirit that he could conceive of the ode and its delivery as one consistent whole without being perturbed by the consideration that he was to deliver it and to a modern audience trained in the reading of poetry, not in the hearing of it.

pation, which I hardly venture to speak of. Was the verse already *do?* Did I steal it? Not to my knowledge; but perhaps it might be well to set a literary detective on my trail.

I return the letter.

Faithfully yours,

J. R. Lowell.

[1] Quoted by A. V. G. Allen in his *Life and Letters of Phillips Brooks*, i. 552.

Both the poetic reciter and the recipients were wanting, and the ode remains, a noble piece of declamation indeed for whoever has the great gift of poetic declamation, yet after all as surely to be read and not spoken as Browning's dramas are to be read and not acted. It is this fine literary sense, penetrating even to a supposititious occasion, which clings to the ode and makes it so far caviare to the general. Yet it would be false indeed to regard such a statement as final. The fire which burned in Lowell's members, leaving him cold afterward, glows in the great lines, and certain it is that at no other single poem, unless it be Whitman's "My Captain," does the young American of the generation born since the war so kindle his patriotic emotions.

The sixth stanza was not recited, but was written immediately afterward. It is so completely imbedded in the structure of the ode that it is difficult to think of it as an afterthought. It is easy to perceive that while the glow of composition and of recitation was still upon him Lowell suddenly conceived this splendid illustration and indeed climax of the utterance of the Ideal which is so impressive in the fifth stanza. So free, so spontaneous is this characterization of Lincoln, and so concrete in thought, that it has been most frequently read, we suspect, of any single portion of the ode, and it is so eloquent that one likes to fancy the whole force of the ode behind it, as if Lowell needed the fire he had fanned to white heat, for the very purpose of forging this last, firm tempered bit of steel.

Into these threescore lines Lowell has poured a conception of Lincoln which may justly be said to be to-day the accepted idea which Americans hold of their great President. It was the final expression of the judgment which had slowly been forming in Lowell's own mind, and when he summed him up in his last line, —

"New birth of our new soul, the first American,"

he was honestly throwing away all the doubts which had from time to time beset him, and letting his ardent pursuit of the ideal, his profound faith in democracy as incarnate in his country, centre in this one man.

In April, 1887, the *Century Magazine* had a brief article headed "Lincoln and Lowell," in which the editor, quoting the pregnant sentence on Lincoln from Lowell's recently published address on "Democracy," is reminded that Lowell "was the first of the leading American writers to see clearly and fully, and clearly and fully and enthusiastically proclaim the greatness of Abraham Lincoln." And after quoting this sixth stanza of the ode, he goes back and recalls the political papers in the *Atlantic* and *North American Review*, with their references to Lincoln which we have already noted. The next number of the *Century* contained an article in the nature of a postscript, citing the early judgment of Emerson also on the President. In publishing Nicolay and Hay's "Life of Lincoln" in the magazine, the editor naturally was interested to recover the impression made by Lin-

coln when he was comparatively an untried man, on the poets and seers, who have a clearer divination than politicians. He was in correspondence with Lowell and wished if he could to learn what Longfellow and Whittier had then said.

Lowell replied under date of 7 February, 1887: "I can recollect nothing about Lincoln by either L. or W., though this would prove nothing. I *do* remember a debate with Dr. Holmes just after Lincoln's nomination. It was under the elms in front of the old Holmes house (where he took a photograph of me by O. W. H. and Sun), and he was much exercised in mind because Seward had not been the man. I, who had read Lincoln's speeches, was entirely content." The extracts which I have given from Lowell's letters and essays make it, however, quite clear that the full recognition of Lincoln's greatness was a growth and not an immediate insight. Nor is this strange. Lowell never saw Lincoln. Had he met him early in his career, and enjoyed the advantage which comes from personal sight, as Hawthorne for example did, there is little doubt that he would have borne away from the interview the impression which was stamped on so many ingenuous minds, and he would have read the President's utterances by the light of that illuminating countenance. That Lowell did not at once throw away all doubts and accept Lincoln at the valuation he later placed upon him was due to the facts that Lincoln revealed himself only by degrees in his speech and act, and that while he was then making himself

known Lowell was cherishing an ideal of his country and its destiny which called for the loftiest expression of patriotism. He was above all eager for a demonstration of high courage and fearless insistence upon national supremacy, when the country seemed rocking with inconstancy. That he should confess in Lincoln the "new American" was an evidence that the pure idealism which had marked Lowell's political thinking and writing, an idealism moreover conjoined with shrewd practical sense, had at last found, to his profound satisfaction, a great exemplar, and the life and death of this wonderful product of the American soil presaged for him the development of a race of freemen.

CHAPTER XI

POETRY AND PROSE

1858–1872

Lowell's writing during the war, and very largely also during the four previous years in which he had been engaged on the *Atlantic*, was mainly of a political character, and it has seemed best not to interrupt the record with much reference to his other writings and his pursuits generally during these eight years. But though he felt keenly the great movement which was breaking up the old union and making way for the new and greater union, he was too established in his own order of life to permit that to undergo any violent change. Even in his political writing, as we have seen, he was first of all a man of letters, with an imaginative foresight; his occupation both as a teacher and an editor gave a certain steadying force to his powers, so that though he rebelled against the irksomeness of routine he was delivered from what might have been the waywardness of a too self-centred life.

His safety-valve during all this period was in his letters to his familiar friends, as it was also in the free talk which he held with them; and this, even though he chafed under restraint and pres-

sure which seemed to him to lessen his spontaneity. "How malicious you are," he writes to Miss Norton, 23 October, 1858, "about what I said of women's being good letter writers! What I meant was that they wrote more unconsciously than we do. I don't know how it is with other folks, but I cannot sit down now and write a letter as if I were talking. Good writing, I take it, can only result from necessity of expression, and an author satisfies that in so many ways that his letters are apt to be dull.

"I like 'Miles Standish' better than you do. I think it in some respects the best long poem L. has written. It is so simple and picturesque, and the story is not encumbered with unavailing description, which is a fault in 'Evangeline.' But I quite agree with you about the metre. It is too deceitfully easy.

"One might begin at dawn nor end till the purple twilight,
Stringing verses at will, nor know it was verse he was stringing.
This is the modern way, the way of steamer and railroad
Where all the work is done, you scarcely know how, by the Engine.
Ah, but the Hill of Fame, can they dig it down? can they grade it?
Difficult always is Good, and he, I guess, who attains it
Starts with two feet and a staff and bread for To-day in his wallet,
Footsore dropping at last, repaid by long hope of the summit."

His college duties he performed with conscientious fidelity, and he found at times a genuine satisfaction in the free intercourse with his students over great subjects, yet he could not always overlook the immaturity of his pupils, and he was im-

patient at the sort of work outside of direct teaching which falls to the lot of college professors. The task of lecturing itself was sure to suggest the incompleteness of expression, and so offend all his genius as a writer. "Yesterday," he writes to Miss Norton, in the fall of 1859, "I began my lectures. I came off better than I expected, for I am always a great coward beforehand. I *hate* lecturing, for I have discovered (entre nous) that it is almost impossible to learn *all* about anything, unless, indeed, it be some piece of ill-luck, and then one has the help of one's friends, you know. . . . I am trying to reform the Spanish and Italian classes. Charles would be astonished to hear me read the Castilian tongue, now wellnigh as familiar to me as Castilian soap. If he would n't be, *I am*. I am about as much 'Spanish,' tell him, 'as a Connecticut segar.'"

At the same time he wrote to Mr. Norton: "I am busier than ever, and, I fear, fruitlessly. My Italian class are half of them drones, and this hinders my getting on as I would with the rest. I am studying Spanish, as I did German in Dresden, reading it in all my leisure time, and before long mean to make myself thorough in it. At forty a man learns fast. My Spanish class is a very good one. There are only five, and they all do their best. *Vacare musis* — what does that mean? I have almost forgotten."

"I champ the bit sometimes here," he writes to the same a year later, "but God's will be done! *Ancora imparo*, though I be in a go-cart. My

Spanish recitations cost me some time and trouble as yet, for I make the students parse and construe with never-failing strictness. For this I have to study the grammar harder than any of them, for my Italian is always in my way with its slightly differing forms. However, I have learned more already than I should have thought possible a year ago, and I think some of the students seem to be interested."

Now and then he could make his college work and his *Atlantic* work play into each other, but not often. "I have as yet only dipped into your last four volumes," he writes 12 June, 1860, to R. G. White, "and those I keep for the same good time (i. e. vacation). I have to prepare some lectures on Shakespeare, and shall kill two birds with one stone by making use of your edition, and so enabling myself to write an intelligent notice of it for the *Atlantic*."

The *Atlantic* itself gave him an agreeable change from his class-room duties, even if it took him along somewhat the same road as when, shortly after he undertook it, he received a contribution from Sainte-Beuve on Béranger, and translated it for the number for February, 1858. Two months later he began that series of criticisms on the successive volumes of Smith's "Library of Old English Authors," which he completed in the *North American* ten years afterward, and combined into the long paper printed in the first volume of his "Literary Essays." As an instance of minute detective work in criticism, the article is

noteworthy, but we suspect that his readers to-day pass lightly over the scoring of Hazlitt's editorship to read the brilliant characterizations of Elizabethan poets and dramatists, which crop out of the stony soil of textual criticism. In writing these articles Lowell was recurring to subjects which had, as we have seen, unfailing interest for him, and one cannot compare these notes on Chapman, Webster, Marlowe, and others with the observations that occur in "Conversations with the Old Dramatists," without marking the greater mellowness of nature from which the later criticism proceeds. Lowell writes of them, not as in the first instance when he was just returned from a voyage of discovery, but as one who has lived long and familiarly in this rich country of the poetic mind.[1]

Excepting the "Biglow Papers," a couple of political articles, two or three poems, and a few brief reviews of books, Lowell did not contribute to the *Atlantic* during the four years of the war, and naturally he turned his prose work into the *North American* after he became one of its editors. There, as we have seen, his work was mainly political, though he also did much reviewing of books; but after the pressure of war-time was lifted he made the review the vehicle for more strictly literary articles, and it was plainly a relief

[1] An interesting venture was made by Little, Brown & Co. in the summer of 1864, which unfortunately proved too uncertain to be carried through. Lowell was to have edited a series of volumes illustrative of the Old Dramatists, from Marlowe down. He prepared one volume, which was put into type but never published. A set of proofs is in the library of Harvard University.

to him to spring back to subjects more congenial to his nature. In January, 1865, when Mr. Norton supplied the main political paper, Lowell printed that most characteristic article which in his collected writings bears the title "New England Two Centuries Ago," and is in outward form a review of the third volume of Palfrey's "History of New England" and of four volumes of the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society. In its larger part a skilful florilegium of early writings, the paper is also and emphatically the reflection of Lowell's mind during the stress of the war, when he was doubly concerned over the relation between the two great English-speaking nations and the practical solutions of the problems presented to democracy in the reëstablishment of order and union in the United States. He had rising in him, as his Ode shows, a great passion for the whole country; but as has been well said by Colonel Higginson, that no one can be a true cosmopolitan who is not at home in his own country, so it is equally true that national consciousness has its basis in local pride and affection. The genius of our political organism, by which one is called on for a double loyalty to state and nation, a loyalty jeoparded by the heresy of an extreme state-rights dogma, was finely disclosed in Lowell's attitude. Fortunately for us the locality, the community in which our fortune is cast, has in itself a political essence, so that it is not mere attachment to the place of birth and breeding which makes its natural demand on us, but membership in an organism

lacking only the crown of absolute independence to make it a unit of politics. It is a subtle but very real distinction between state and nation that permits not a divided but a complex loyalty, and the profound meaning which lies in the interplay of state and federal power is reflected in the consciousness of Americans as they bear themselves toward one or the other authority.

Now New England, though not an entity in politics, has so distinct a character that each of the states included in that name is representative of an order which is far more than a geographical division. Largely by reason of its historic genesis and development, New England is more an individual than any other group of commonwealths unless it be the Cotton States, and a man of Massachusetts, clearly the heart of the whole system, is very sure to think of himself as a New Englander without prejudice to his loyalty to his own state. Lowell certainly did. It was through New England, its history, its spirit, its genius, that he apprehended the very nature of freedom and the principles of democracy. Mr. Henry James has well said: "New England was heroic to him, for he felt in his pulses the whole history of her *origines;* it was impossible to know him without a sense that he had a rare divination of the hard realities of her past."[1] And this article on "New England Two Centuries Ago," designed to offer something of a conspectus of a people and land from which he was

[1] "James Russell Lowell," in the *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1892.

sprung, whose life was coursing in his veins, was also an interpretation of the political faith he held, a faith which he postulated for the final manifestation of the whole nation that in his imagination he saw rising out of the confusion of struggle. "I have little sympathy," he says at the close, "with declaimers about the Pilgrim Fathers, who look upon them all as men of grand conceptions and superhuman foresight. An entire ship's company of Columbuses is what the world never saw. It is not wise to form any theory and fit our facts to it, as a man in a hurry is apt to cram his travelling-bag, with a total disregard of shape or texture. But perhaps it may be found that the facts will only fit comfortably together on a single plan, namely, that the fathers did have a conception (which those will call grand who regard simplicity as a necessary element of grandeur) of founding here a commonwealth on those two eternal bases of Faith and Work; that they had indeed no revolutionary ideas of universal liberty, but yet, what answered the purpose quite as well, an abiding faith in the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God; and that they did not so much propose to make all things new, as to develop the latent possibilities of English law and English character, by clearing away the fences by which the abuse of the one was gradually discommoning the other from the broad fields of universal right. They were not in advance of their age, as it is called, for no one who is so can ever work profitably in it; but they were alive to the highest and most earnest thinking of their time."

In this article, also, one may see something of Lowell's feeling about England, which again was almost a traditionary sentiment. He saw the mother country through the glass of New England, and especially valued that Puritan strain in English history which had found such free play in New England. "Puritanism," he says, "believing itself quick with the seed of religious liberty, laid, without knowing it, the egg of democracy;" and he found in the governmental attitude of England toward America in his own day a reminder of the policy exercised after the Restoration toward New England.

Lowell's letters make it clear that at this time he was not given to the enjoyment of much hospitality. Mrs. Lowell was frequently an invalid, and though he had familiar friends to stay with him, as Rowse the painter, and gave cordial invitations to such as might be passing through Cambridge, he neither entertained much himself nor accepted entertainment at other houses. Now and then some man of letters came over from England or France and Lowell was asked to meet him. He records such an experience in a letter dated 20 September, 1861: —

"I dined the other day with Anthony Trollope, a big, red-faced, rather underbred Englishman of the bald-with-spectacles type. A good roaring positive fellow who deafened me (sitting on his right) till I thought of Dante's Cerberus. He says he goes to work on a novel 'just like a shoemaker on a shoe, only taking care to make honest stitches.'

Gets up at 5 every day, does all his writing before breakfast, and always writes just so many pages a day. He and Dr. Holmes were very entertaining. The Autocrat started one or two hobbies, and charged, paradox in rest — but it was pelting a rhinoceros with seed-pearl.

"*Dr.* You don't know what Madeira is in England?

"*T.* I 'm not so sure it 's worth knowing.

"*Dr.* Connoisseurship in it with us is a fine art. There are men who will tell you a dozen kinds, as Dr. Waagen would know a Carlo Dolci from a Guido.

"*T.* They might be better employed!

"*Dr.* Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well.

"*T.* Ay, but that 's begging the whole question. I don't admit it 's *worse* doing at all. If they earn their bread by it, it may be *worse* doing (roaring).

"*Dr.* But you may be assured —

"*T.* No, but I may n't be asshŏrred. I *won't* be asshored. I don't intend to be asshŏred (roaring louder)!

"And so they went it. It was very funny. Trollope would n't give him any chance. Meanwhile, Emerson and I, who sat between them, crouched down out of range and had some very good talk, with the shot hurtling overhead. I had one little passage at arms with T. *apropos* of English peaches. T. ended by roaring that England was the only country where such a thing as a peach or a grape was known. I appealed to Haw-

thorne, who sat opposite. His face mantled and trembled for a moment with some droll fancy, as one sees bubbles rise and send off rings in still water when a turtle stirs at the bottom, and then he said, 'I asked an Englishman once who was praising their peaches to describe to me exactly what he meant by a peach, and he described something very like a cucumber.' I rather liked Trollope."

Lowell found in the winter of 1865–1866 a most congenial occasion for society in the meetings in Mr. Longfellow's study, held for scrutiny of the proofs of that poet's translation of the "Divina Commedia." Mr. Longfellow records in his Diary, 25 October, 1865: "Lowell, Norton, and myself had the first meeting of our Dante Club. We read the XXV. *Purgatorio;* and then had a little supper. We are to meet every Wednesday evening at my house." In the first Report of the Dante Society, Mr. Norton gives a full and interesting account of these meetings, and of the task they set themselves.

"We paused," he says, "over every doubtful passage, discussed the various readings, considered the true meaning of obscure words and phrases, sought for the most exact equivalent of Dante's expression, objected, criticised, praised, with a freedom that was made perfect by Mr. Longfellow's absolute sweetness, simplicity, and modesty, and by the entire confidence that existed between us. Witte's text was always before us, and of the early commentators Buti was the one to whom we

had most frequent and most serviceable recourse. They were delightful evenings; there could be no pleasanter occupation; the spirits of poetry, of learning, of friendship, were with us. Now and then some other friend or acquaintance would join us for the hours of study. Almost always one or two guests would come in at ten o'clock, when the work ended, and sit down with us to a supper, with which the evening closed."

With the *North American Review* still making its quarterly demands upon him, but the political impulse less urgent, Lowell turned naturally to literary criticism. Thus far, he had not made any deliberate appraisal of great writers, save in his short paper on Keats, which, from the occasion that called it out, was rather biographical than critical. He had in a fragmentary fashion in his "Conversations," and in a discursive manner in his lectures, given appreciations of the great poets and dramatists of England, but in the next decade he was to print a series of essays which should embody his reading, study, reflection, and poetic insight in that field of human endeavor where his own work stands, and which had been since his boyish days the one great subject of his investigation.

History, which he read with avidity, was the background from which were projected the great figures of literature. Philosophy was not for him a system of independent reasoning, but rather the unclassified winged thoughts on high themes embodied in great poetic and dramatic art. Lan-

guage, always a subject full of interest for him, was attacked, not from the point of view of a man of science, but from that of one curious of its human relations and its instrumentality in art. Nor was his knowledge of the plastic arts more than that which comes incidentally to a traveller and a general reader and observer, or his interest in them especially keen. He was very likely to bring the canons of literary art to bear upon them, sometimes indeed, as might be guessed, with shrewdness and analogical truthfulness; or he was affected by personal considerations, as when he writes of Story: "I saw the photographs of William's statues, and think them *very* fine. They are really noble. The Quincy is admirable — the best thing of the kind our modern times has produced. In short, to my thinking, William is the only man of them all who knows how to do the thing. It was a real pleasure to be so thoroughly satisfied with the work of an old friend." He recognized frankly his own limitations in the matter, as indeed he was disposed to think the defect almost ineradicable in the Saxon, who "has never shown any capacity for art, nay, commonly commits ugly blunders when he is tempted in that direction;" and apparently his only suggestion for bettering the condition was to put before workmen good illustrations of great art in the books they should find in their libraries, and give them an acquaintance with Ruskin's writings.

But literature stood to him as the great exponent of all that was permanent in the human spirit.

"There is much," he says, "that is deciduous in books, but all that gives them a title to rank as literature in the highest sense is perennial. Their vitality is the vitality not of one or another blood or tongue, but of human nature; their truth is not topical and transitory, but of universal acceptation; and thus all great authors seem the coevals not only of each other, but of whoever reads them, growing wiser with him as he grows wise, and unlocking to him one secret after another as his own life and experience give him the key, but on no other condition." [1] It was with this principle determining his choice that he proceeded with more or less conscious assembling to discourse on Carlyle, Emerson, Lessing, Rousseau, Shakespeare, Dryden, Chaucer, Pope, Milton, Dante, Spenser, and Wordsworth, as well as to write in many detached passages on the genius of Goethe. Later he returned to the same general field, and besides revising his judgment on some of these topics, treated also with more or less fulness of Gray, Cervantes, Fielding, and Coleridge, while any one who consults the elaborate index to his prose writings will readily see how many other authors who belong in the great ranks have been drawn upon for illustration of the one great theme.

To his reading of all this literature he brought the touchstone of his own life and experience. In this word "experience," moreover, must be included his own highest experiments. His poetry, for the most part, as we have already seen, does not have

[1] "Shakespeare Once More," iii. 33.

its roots in other literature; it springs from that life which he held in common with those whom he reverenced for their own acts of literary creation. He quotes the recommendation of a friend that he should read poetry, feed himself on bee bread so that he might get into the mood of writing poetry; but, though all his life long Lowell fed, as by the most natural appetite, on poetry and other forms of imaginative literature, his own poetry is not bookish, nor does it borrow in form or phrase. Even when most impressionable in his youth, the influence upon him of Keats and Tennyson was more obvious than that of Shakespeare or Marlowe, only because, eschewing the imitative, his verse took the color of his generation. The likenesses were always general, and when he essayed forms of verse most rigid in their historical development, as the sonnet and the ode, he simply obeyed the law as his great progenitors had done, finding his freedom within the law, and not in outbreaks and protests. The conscious intention to be original, he himself says, seldom leads to anything better than extravagance; and there is a passage in his paper on Chaucer which sums up a large part of his literary philosophy.[1]

"Poets have forgotten that the first lesson of literature, no less than of life, is the learning how to burn your own smoke; that the way to be original is to be healthy; that the fresh color, so delightful in all good writing, is won by escaping from the fixed air of self into the brisk atmosphere

[1] "Chaucer," iii. 292.

of universal sentiments; and that to make the common marvellous, as if it were a revelation, is the test of genius."

With his large literary essays as works of art I do not purpose concerning myself; such study lies somewhat outside the range of a biography, but as these papers formed a considerable and very important expression of his mind at one period of his life, it is worth while to look at them with a view to discover how far they serve to disclose him, to read them by the light of his experience, and to see if he put his personality into this form of writing. The publication of Carlyle's "Frederick the Great" was the occasion of the first of these articles. In writing of it to Leslie Stephen, when it was reprinted in "My Study Windows," he admits that he was harder on Carlyle than he meant to be, because he was fighting against a secret partiality. The phrase lets one a little into Lowell's mind. As far back as in his college days he was reading Carlyle with gusto, and the breezy description[1] which he gave of Boston at the period when Carlyle's "message" acted as a sort of leaven in the new dough of New England, was a lively reminiscence of his own tumultuous youth. Thus, upon writing of Carlyle when he himself was nearing the line of fifty, there was an undercurrent of reminiscence of his own callowness. He remembered his devotion to the Carlyle of the "Miscellanies," and was more or less conscious that he had outlived his first enthusiasm. With all his admira-

[1] "Thoreau," i. 361.

tion for the great critic who stirred him when he was himself pricking on the plain of Reform, his point of view was now changed, for he had left Carlyle's side and come into more complete possession of his own judgment. The secret influences which forbade him to be preponderatingly ethical, which kept him from abandoning himself to the anti-slavery cause, even when he was fighting in the ranks, and made it impossible for him to be a great teacher, though quite aware of what constitutes a great teacher, had lessened, perhaps, his effectiveness in some single direction, but had given him greater poise and enabled him on rare occasions to bring all his powers into play, and then to do easily, without conscious effort, the thing he wanted to do. The "Commemoration Ode" is an instance, and in this judgment of Carlyle he seems to me unwittingly to be judging the Lowell who seemed somewhat possible in the days when he first read Carlyle. There is a sentence in the essay which puts the thing in a nutshell. "The delicate skeleton of admirably articulated and related parts which underlies and sustains every true work of art, and keeps it from sinking on itself a shapeless heap, he [Carlyle] would crush remorselessly to come at the marrow of meaning. With him the ideal sense is secondary to the ethical and metaphysical, and he has but a faint conception of their possible unity."

It was in the growing conception of this unity that Lowell had moved away from Carlyle. The constant adjustment of the ideal and the ethical

had been the ripening process in his mind, a process greatly stimulated by the urgent need he felt during the past few years for finding some common ground on which his visions of truth and freedom and his practical sense could meet. It was largely through a great political realization that Lowell came to be what thenceforth he was, a sane critic of literature and a poet whose imagination instinctively sought large moulds. This is not to say that he was indifferent to any other expression; his nature was too free and spontaneous for that; but if one is to be measured by the main incidents of his life, it is fair to say that the Lowell who after this left his impress on his countrymen was a man of such balance of mind that his judgments and his poems alike had the weight that comes from this equipoise, and the man thus characterized could scarcely fail in new relations to show the ease of one self-centred, and not the restlessness and anxiety of an experimenter with life.

It is this consciousness of art governed by great laws, whether applied to life or to literature, that dominates Lowell's expression, and in the essay on Carlyle, his keenest criticism is called out by his perception of Carlyle's failure in this respect. "Had Mr. Carlyle been fitted out completely by nature as an artist, he would have had an ideal in his work which would have lifted his mind away from the muddier part of him, and trained him to the habit of seeking and seeing the harmony rather than the discord and contradiction of things." Again we read in this passage the unconscious re-

flection of its writer's own mind, which once had been far enough away from this habit. Nothing in Carlyle appears to interest him more than the lawlessness into which his exuberant humor had led him, and the narrow escape he had had of being a great poet, and he sums up his judgment of "Frederick the Great" by saying that "it has the one prime merit of being the work of a man who has every quality of a great poet except that supreme one of rhythm, which shapes both matter and manner to harmonious proportion, and that where it is good, it is good as only genius knows how to be."

In the same number of the *Review* which holds this article on Carlyle appears a shorter one on Swinburne, which, though dealing with a more occasional subject, also illustrates the temper in which Lowell was now writing, and has a special interest, since it deals directly with poetry and intimates, that when treating of a contemporary writer his mind was most set on that aspect of poetry which ignores the distinction of time. The phenomenon of a new poet sends him back into an inquiry into the very realities of poetry itself. Though he has a few specific criticisms of Swinburne's "Chastelard" and his "Atalanta in Calydon," the theme which interests him most is the possibility of reënacting antiquity in poetry, and he devotes the larger part of his paper to a demonstration of the truth that the result of all such endeavors is to produce the artificial and not the artistic. In a letter to Mr. Stedman, written ap-

parently when this subject was fresh in his mind, he repeats his conclusion with the force of a friendly letter writer. Mr. Stedman had thanked him for a review of his poem, "Alice of Monmouth," but asks his judgment of another poem he had written on an antique theme. "I will answer frankly," wrote Lowell, "that I did not like Alektryon, and don't think him at all to be compared to his sister Alice, — a strutting fellow that wants to make me believe he can crow in ancient Greek. Alice is Christian, modern, American, and that 's why I like her. I don't believe in these modern antiques — no, not in Landor, not in Swinburne, not in any of 'em. They are all wrong. It 's like writing Latin verses — the material you work in is dead."

Though Lowell had thus turned with avidity to his more congenial field of letters, he was not yet to be released from the duty imposed upon him by his editorship of the *Review*, and by his own political thought, of taking part in the discussion which Reconstruction raised. In the same number of the *North American* which contained the two papers just noted, he wrote also an article on "The President on the Stump," which, after a cursory consideration of the growing division between President Johnson and Congress, closed with a hypothetical address delivered to a Southern delegation by an imaginary President Johnson. Into this address Lowell packed his convictions as to the attitude which should be taken toward the Southern States by a President who had come from the

South. It was so unusual for Lowell to dramatize, even in poetry, that this assumption has a singular interest, and, barring the element of Southern birth, is a close copy of Lowell's mind at this time. Every man of thought has his dream of action, and we can read in this speech how Lowell would have translated his ideals of truth, freedom, and justice into executive acts, could he, who had watched the conflict closely, have had the chance that poets picture of being king for a day.

Perhaps all this was in his mind when he wrote in his last "Biglow Paper:" —

> "Ez I wuz say'n', I hain't no chance to speak
> So 's 't all the country dreads me onct a week,
> But I 've consid'ble o' thet sort o' head
> That sets to home an' thinks wut *might* be said."

This last paper, "Mr. Hosea Biglow's Speech in March Meeting," followed in the May *Atlantic*, and said over again the same lesson in the freer form of verse and with the more familiar dramatic impersonation of the Yankee countryman. It is an illustration of the greater carrying power of Lowell's verse over his prose that the shrewd political philosophy which lies in the two series of the "Biglow Papers," closely as it applied to the political situations in 1846–1848 and 1861–1866, has come again into play in the very different situation in national politics following the war for the independence of Cuba, so that while one would find in the newspapers but few quotations from Lowell's "Political Essays" he would find plenty of lines from the "Biglow Papers."

These two productions were not to be the last of his political writings at this period. One more was to follow in October, but the impulse to take part in the discussion of national events was relaxed, and he was falling back into his more congenial life of devotion to letters in the quiet retreat of Elmwood. "My dear Charles," he writes to Mr. Norton, 30 May, 1866, "I snatch a moment from the whirl of dissipation to bring up for you the annals of Cambridge to the present date. In the first place, Cranch and his daughters are staying with us — since last Saturday. On that day I took him to club, where he saw many old friends (he has not been here for twenty years, poor fellow!) and had a good time. We had a pleasant time, I guess. With me it was a business meeting. I sat between Hoar and Brimmer, that I might talk over college matters. Things will be arranged to suit me, I rather think, and the salary (perhaps) left even larger than I hoped.

"Cranch and I amuse me very much. They read their poems to each other like a couple of boys, and so contrive for themselves a very good-natured, if limited, public. I cannot help laughing to myself, whenever I am alone, at these rhythmical debauches. The best of it is that there is always one at least who is never bored. I like him very much, though it always makes me a little sad that a man with so many gifts should lack the one of being successful. He brought with him a fairy story full of fancy, and illustrations, most of which are as charming and original as can be. I hope to

get Fields to publish it.[1] Cranch wants some such encouragement very much. He begins to think himself born under an ill star. I fancy the trouble is that he was not brought up to work, in a nation of day laborers. You know I have a natural sympathy with the butterflies as against the ants and the bees, and I think they will all be put in a heavenly poor-house one of these days, with the industrious rich to work for them, and buy their books and pictures. Cranch always reminds me of Clough, so you may be sure I like to have him here. We shall enjoy each other very much if we don't quarrel over our poems.

"You will see my verses to Bartlett in the next *Atlantic*,[2] and I guess you will like 'em. They seemed to me fanciful and easy when I corrected the proof, with some droll triple rhymes. . . .

"It is now high time to change the conversation and speak of the weather. We are having it of the rarest April sort — whims of sunshine dappling a continuous mood of rain — erratic thunderclaps ending like my novel with the first chapter — promising notes of fine to-morrows ending not in bankruptcy but liquidation. In short, the clerk of the weather seems suddenly to have bethought him of his remissness with the watering-pot for the last two years and is making it up all at once. All the wells (except, of course, that of Truth) will be filled again and milk will be plenty once more.

[1] This was no doubt Cranch's *Kobboltozo*.

[2] "To J. B. on sending me a seven-pound trout," *Atlantic Monthly*, July, 1866.

The greenness of everything is delicious. I feel as if I were sprouting myself, so keen is my farmer's sympathy with my beets and carrots, and especially with a new field of grass which was becoming *too* emblematic of flesh, and has been snatched from the very jaws of death by this intervention of Jupiter Pluvius. I had just had a new pump set in the well at the foot of the garden, and had begun to think it would be merely a dry symbol, but this will set all its arteries a-throbbing.

"Your dream of a stock-farm is a delightful one (there is a yellow-bird in the cherry-tree by my window drinking the tremulous rain diamonds that hang under the twigs), but I fear that the only stocks I am young enough for now are in railroad companies and the like — whose golden fleeces yield a half yearly clip. I am satisfied, though, that nobody has such a sympathy with the seasons and feels himself so truly a partner in the trade of nature as a farmer. I find great pleasure in my own little ventures in this Earth-ship of ours on her annual voyages, and shall even grow jolly again if my college duties are so arranged next year that I shall get rid of some of my worries, and be able to give my trees and crops the encouragement of a cheerful face. Depend upon it, they feel it and grow in proportion. Fancy the disheartenment of a regiment of cabbages or turnips when they see the commander-in-chief with a long face! Where shall they find the cheerful juices that shall carry them through a long drouth, or the happy temper that is as good as an umbrella to 'em in dull wet

spells of weather, if their natural leader be as bloodless as the one, or show no better head than the other? Does n't it stand to reason?"

Six weeks later he wrote to the same friend: "The hot weather we have been having for some time — 95° for nearly a week together — has pretty nearly used me up. It has made me bilious and blue, my moral thermometer sinking as the atmospheric rose. But Sunday afternoon we had one of the finest thunderstorms I ever saw, beginning in the true way with a sudden whirl of wind that filled the air with leaves and dust and twigs (*dinanzi va superbo*), followed in due time by a burst of rain. One flash struck close by us somewhere, and I heard distinctly the crack of a bough at the moment of its most intense redness. Just at sunset the cloud lifted in the west, and the effect was one that I always wish all my friends could be at Elmwood to see. The tops of the English elms were turned to sudden gold, which seen against a leaden background of thundercloud had a supernatural look. Presently that faded, and after the sun had set came a rainbow more extravagant than any I ever saw. There were seven lines of the glory looking like the breaking of quiet surf on the beach of a bay. First came one perfect bow — the more brilliant that the landscape was dark everywhere by the absence of the sunlight. Gradually another outlined itself at some distance above, and then the first grew double, triple, till at last six arches of red could be counted. The other colors I could only see in the two main bows. I thought it

a trick of vision, but Fanny and her sister counted as I did. A triple arch was the most I had ever seen before. Here is a diagram. . . . *d* is the spectator for whom this wonderful show was exhibited. I should have made *d* a capital, thus, *D*, to indicate his importance in the scene. For have I not read in some old moralist that God would not have created so much beauty without also creating an eye to see and a soul to feel it? As if God could not be a poet! The author of the book of Genesis knew better. However, it is something to have had an eye see what we are seeing; it seems to double the effect by some occult sympathy, and my rainbows are always composed of one part rain, one part sunshine, and one part blessed Henry Vaughan with his 'Still young and fine,' and his 'World's gray fathers in one knot!' The older I grow the more I am convinced that (there) are no satisfactions so deep and so permanent as our sympathies with outward nature. . . .

"In some moods I heartily despise and hate myself, there is so much woman in me (. . . I mean no harm. I was designed, sketched rather, for a man). Why, I found myself the other day standing in a muse with something like tears in my eyes, before a little *pirus* that had rooted itself on the steep edge of the runnel that drains the meadow above Craigie's pond, and thinking — what do you suppose? Why, how happy and careless the life of such a poor shrub was compared with ours! But I was in a melancholy and desponding mist of mind, and I snatched myself back

out of it to manlier thoughts. But the reality and sincerity of the emotion struck me as I mused over it, and I set it down on the debtor side of my account. Still, *can* one get away from his nature? That always puzzles me. Your close-grained, strong fellows tell you that you can, but they forget that they are only acting out their complexion, not escaping it. I did not expect to chase my rainbow into such a miserable drizzle, but for that very reason I will let it go as I have written it, though I am rather ashamed of having uncovered my nakedness so plumply. In spite of the heat we have had rain enough to keep the country beautiful, and my salt marshes have been in their glory. The salt grass is to other grass like fur compared with hair, and the color of the 'black grass,' and even its texture at the right distance remind one of sable. I have been making night studies of late, having enjoyed, as folks say, a season of sleeplessness, and I saw the dawn begin the other night at two o'clock. The first bird to sing was a sparrow. The cocks followed close upon him, and the phœbe upon them. The crows were the latest to shake the night out of them.

"The Corporation have given me a tutor and cut my salary down to $1500. But I think they will give me what they call a 'gratuity' if the college funds justify it. If not, I must take to lecturing. . . . I am called away to the hayfield, so good-by. I work more or less every day out of doors and like it. I am getting back as well as I can to my pristine ways of life."

He had wished to purchase a little immunity from the routine of college duties, but he needed to increase his income, for the change in his college work, though it gave him more liberty, left him with smaller salary. Except for the months when his editorship of the *Atlantic* and his college professorship had jointly given him a fairly comfortable livelihood, he had always been in an impecunious condition; his writings had not been especially remunerative, and as he was somewhat dependent on outside pressure for a stimulus to work, it is probable that his need of money had furnished this stimulus.

So this summer he was not unwilling to help himself out with some special tasks on the *British Poets*. "My job," he writes, "is correcting Dryden for the next edition. I enjoy it, to be sure, but it is rather wearisome. I have always had a great respect for Dryden's solid ability, and I am glad to read him in this minute way as a study of his language. I have long thought that he was the last writer of really first-rate English prose. Make every possible deduction, and I still think so, and I believe it is because of two things: first, that the language had not yet been sophisticated by writing for the press; and second, that he wrote as a gentleman rather than as an author. It is easy to see why his verse has been so much admired, it is so vigorous and easy, and there is such mastery of language. Dryden *knew* a great deal, and uses his knowledge with an ease of manner that is very charming to me.

"The work takes about three days to a volume, and I have the first two to go over again, because I corrected more than they are willing to pay for (I mean to the printer). I find some strange nonsense, chiefly caused by punctuation. The Donne, on which I spent three or four weeks of unremitting work, I have literally lost. Little & Brown don't want the expense of printing, and I have lost the book; can't find it anywhere. I find another copy — but perfectly clean!"[1]

A proposal was made at this time that he should write the life of Hawthorne. Longfellow suggested this to Mrs. Hawthorne, who talked with Lowell about it. He was attracted by the subject, and saw that he would have abundant material, for Mrs. Hawthorne told him that there were seventeen volumes of notes, beside the letters which could be collected. After consideration, however, Mrs. Hawthorne feared to take the risks involved in having the precious manuscripts go out of her hands, and the plan was abandoned, Mrs. Hawthorne contenting herself with printing a portion of the notes in the *Atlantic*, and afterward issuing the several volumes of Passages from the American, English, French, and Italian Note-Books.

Lowell was busy also this summer getting ready for publication the second series of the "Biglow Papers," his chief labor being in the long Introduction, which is a justification of his use of the

[1] The lost copy of Donne turned up, and after Lowell's death his daughter and Mr. Norton used it for the production of a special edition by the Grolier Club in 1895.

rustic New England form by a careful tracing of many of the words and phrases and local pronunciation to the English usage of the seventeenth century, brought over by the early settlers and domesticated under conditions which served to preserve them in common speech. And here may be printed an unfinished letter, written a few months later, in which he sets forth more familiarly some of his linguistic views: "I am not obstinate, but Shakespeare does not tack his 'lesses' to nouns but to verbs. He says 'viewless winds' in 'Measure for Measure,' and means as Milton does in 'Comus' ('I must be viewless now') 'invisible.' So in 'Hamlet,' when he says 'woundless air' he means 'invulnerable,' as you will see by turning to Act I., scene i. I admit that *less* ought to be joined to a noun (as in German *los* always is), but I think one may sin with Shakespeare or Milton, for my instance from which latter I have to thank Malone. I grant that Whittier is no authority — though I suspect he is right in rhyming for the ear and not for the eye, as used to be the fashion. So long as we don't pronounce *arrums* Hibernice, why should n't he rhyme it with psalms? Not that I would. I would be conservative about pronunciation, — the test of good-breeding, — and would leave idioms to the grace of God, where they properly belong. Boys and blackguards have always been my masters in language. I have always felt that if I could attain to their unconscious freedom, I were safe. I would not insist (for example) with our excellent *Daily Advertiser* on 'house to be

let,' because it is unidiomatic and because it is glossologically wrong. We took it directly from the French *maison à louer*. Nor would I say 'by auction,' because 'at' is quite as good. Nor would I say 'the house is in process of erection' for 'the house is building.'"

Lowell dedicated his second series of "Biglow Papers" to Judge Hoar. "A very fit thing," he writes, "it seems to me, for of all my friends he is the most genuine Yankee." In the same letter he writes with eagerness of a new poetic enterprise he had undertaken, or rather of an old one revived.[1] "I have been working hard, and if my liver will let me alone, as it does now, am likely to go on all winter. And on *what* do you suppose? I have taken up one of the unfinished tales of the 'Nooning,' and it grew to a poem of near seven hundred lines! It is mainly descriptive. First, a sketch of the narrator, then his 'prelude,' then his 'tale.' I describe an old inn and its landlord, barroom, etc. It is very homely, but right from nature. I have lent it to Child and hope he will like it, for if he does n't I shall feel discouraged. It was very interesting to take up a thread dropt so long ago, and curious as a phenomenon of memory to find how continuous it had remained in my mind, and how I could go on as if I had let it fall only yesterday." This was "Fitz Adam's Story," which Mr. Child found no difficulty in liking, so that Lowell sent it at once to Mr. Fields for the *Atlantic*, where it appeared in January, 1867. "I mean

[1] See *supra*, i. 300–302.

to work ahead as fast as I can with the rest," he wrote to Mr. Fields, and in the spirit which then possessed him he had high hopes of completing "The Nooning," having already, as we have seen, various parts of it ready for final articulation. He wrote Mr. Fields again, 8 November, 1867, when urged to send more of the poem: "I cannot get into the mood of my Nooning story just now," but evidently he hoped still to go on with it, for he did not include "Fitz Adam's Story" in his next collection of poems published in 1869; yet when twenty years more had gone by, and "The Nooning" was still in fragments, he saw that there was no likelihood of his ever producing the rounded whole, and so included "Fitz Adam's Story" in his latest collection with an apologetic note.

"I am already beginning to feel the relief from those confounded recitations," he wrote a month or so after the fall term at college began, "both in better health and better spirits." He sent Mr. Fields not only this poem for the *Atlantic*, but a fairy tale and a poem for *Our Young Folks*. "You asked me once," he writes, "for a fairy story, and I suppose never expected to hear of it again. But it is not safe to cast bread on *my* waters. I invented a kind of one at once, and yesterday and the day before contrived to write it, partly to spite an infernal pain I was suffering, and which got me under at last. I think I have told it simply enough, and was surprised to find how easy it was to write in words mostly of one syllable. I think there are some pleasant humors

in it, but it may have suffered from my being in such a wretched condition while I wrote it. Please read it yourself, and show it to no one. To tell the honest truth, I have never read *Our Young Folks*, and so do not know whether it is suitable or not. Perhaps I could write it over again, but that might spoil it, for I might not be able to fancy myself so vividly telling it again as I did before.

"Also: I have a jolly little poem that would do for a Christmas number, called 'Hob Gobbling's Song,' written years ago for my nephews, now all dead. Just think of it! and three of the four in battle. Who could have dreamed it twenty years ago?

"You will think I am mad to bombard you thus, but no, I am only beginning to feel the sort of spring impulse of my college freedom. I mean to work off old scores this winter if I can."

The fairy tale, "Uncle Cobus's Story," had pleasant fancy in it, but was curiously literary in its allusions and in its thinly concealed moral a parable of Lowell's own life, with its struggle for supremacy of the two fairies Fan-ta-si-a and El-bogres. The song might fairly be called a New England survival of Elizabethan fairy lore.

As a result of his industry during the summer and early fall, he was able to write at the end of October: "I have in my pocket $820 for my last six weeks' work, and mean for the first time in my life to make an investment of money earned!"

The pain, by the way, which he tried to assuage by writing, was some facial trouble which resulted

in a swelling making him look, as he said, "like a hornpout with the mumps." He had an odd experience with ether which he thus describes: "The ether did n't deaden the pain a bit, that I could discover. Its only effect was to make my head feel as if it were violently waggled to and fro. One odd result there was. For a moment, I lost entirely my present personal identity, and absolutely *was* (without anything of that sense of dualism which commonly goes along with and criticises hallucination) twelve years old and getting ready to go out shooting as I used. Odd as it seems, it was a most painful sensation, and all the rest of the night I was haunted by a feeling that my life was the merest illusion, and I a poor puppet worked by some humorous higher power, who could by a jerk put me back at Mr. Wells's school if he liked."

In the midst of all this congenial labor he was moved also to write one more political article, which appeared in the *North American* for October, 1866. The President and the Secretary of State had formed that curious combination which may be said still somewhat to baffle students of our political history, and Lowell wrote of it, — the last of his series of political writings growing out of the great conflict and the early movements toward reconstruction. Under the title, "The Seward-Johnson Reaction," he examines all the elements in the situation, the President, the Secretary, Congress, and the two parties, and, as before, his study is less an analysis of the component parts than a reassertion of those fundamental principles

which it was his political philosophy to seek for and expound. Trust in the people was the prime article of his creed; hence he sought chiefly for evidence of the settled drift of the nation's conviction, conscience, and instinct. The great stake played for in the war was, in his words, the "Americanization of all America, nothing more and nothing less." Yet with all his clear sight of the ideal and his confidence in the ultimate reason of national thought, Lowell was not a vague theorist nor a contemner of political activity. On the contrary, one of the most impassioned sentences in the paper is that in which he speaks of the dignity of politics. "Now that the signs of the times," he says, "show unmistakably to what the popular mind is making itself up, they [members of Congress] have once more a policy, if we may call that so which is only a calculation of what it would be 'safe to go before the people with,' as they call it. It is always safe to go before them with plain principles of right, and with the conclusions that must be drawn from them by common sense, though this is what too many of our public men can never understand. Now joining a Know-Nothing 'lodge,' now hanging on the outskirts of a Fenian 'circle,' they mistake the momentary eddies of popular whimsy for the great current that sets always strongly in one direction through the life and history of the nation. Is it, as foreigners assert, the fatal defect of our system to fill our highest offices with men whose views in politics are bounded by the next district election? When we consider how noble

the science is, — nobler even than astronomy, for it deals with the mutual repulsions and attractions, not of inert masses, but of bodies endowed with thought and will, calculates moral forces, and reckons the orbits of God's purposes toward mankind, — we feel sure that it is to find nobler teachers and students, and to find them even here." [1]

With this paper Lowell took leave of political writing for a long time.[2] When next we meet him in this field it will be after certain practical experience in the field of politics has given its own color to his mind. Now, as if he had shaken off an irksome task, he turned more entirely to literature. The next three or four years were occupied, as the calendar of his published writings shows, with diligent excursions in letters, both in prose and verse. The article on Percival which appeared in the *North American* for January, 1867, was an amusing treatment of a commonplace book, but it was worth preserving for its humorous presentation of the touchstones of genuine poetry; and from what Lowell says in his letters of the slight personal acquaintance he had with Percival, it is

[1] What Lowell thought of the impeachment business may be inferred from a passage in a letter written to Mr. Godkin, 20 December, 1867: "I was sorry to see you [in the *Nation*] relaxing a little about impeachment. For myself, I have seen no sufficient reason to change my old opinion of its folly. They remind me of the boy's playing at hanging, who finds he has done it all right, — only forgotten to cut himself down. We *might* be able to stand it, we are a wonderful people, of course, but the other lesson of standing A. J. to the end of his tether is worth ten of this. The South is as mad now as it ever will be."

[2] With a single exception, for which see *infra*, p. 122.

quite likely that the encounter gave a little fillip to his interest; yet one may be permitted to look a little more closely and find in Lowell's characterization of the poetic temperament and sentimentalism, when laid bare through the absence of the clothing of sound sense and humor, a distant reflection on weaknesses of which he was conscious when in the depressed mood. There was an assimilating faculty which he possessed that led him, when reading lives and records especially of literary careers, to suffer somewhat as the young student of medicine who is never quite sure that he is not acting as a sort of proxy for the cases whose diagnosis is laid before him. It is curious to find Lowell, when engaged on Lessing's life and works, which he reviewed in the April *North American*, writing to Mr. Norton:[1] "I find somewhat to my surprise from his letters that he had the imaginative temperament in all its force. Can't work for months together, if he tries, his forehead drips with *angstschweiss;* feels ill and looks well — in short, is as pure a hypochondriac as the best. This has had a kind of unhealthy interest for me, for I never read my own symptoms so well described before." And the article itself, if one reads it with Lowell's thought about himself in mind, becomes a curiously parallel record, even to external circumstances, of the two men. It would, of course, be untrue to say that Lowell was thinking of himself when he was writing of Lessing, but I cannot help suspecting, as I read the article, that

[1] *Letters*, i. 349.

there was a subconsciousness which gave a force to certain passages, and that Lowell's interest in his subject was heightened by the plucking at his sleeve of his own memories and ambitions.

In writing for the *North American* the articles on great literature which were afterward reproduced in his books, Lowell was not only drawing upon a liberal familiarity with most of the subjects from repeated readings, but he was sometimes availing himself of earlier treatment in the form of lectures which he had given in connection with his college work. He complains, when preparing his article on Rousseau, that he is always bothered when he tries to do anything with old material, as he was in this case, inserting in his paper patches from college lectures; and any one who has had the experience appreciates the difficulty of turning the *oratio directa* of the lecture into the *oratio obliqua* of the essay, — to mention but one of the "bothers" of such work. But a comparison of the manuscript of Lowell's college lecture with the text of the printed article shows two things: first, that in going back to his old lecture, Lowell easily took fire from his own words and, in copying a sentence, ran on into a fuller, more finished conclusion. For example, in comparing the sonnets of Petrarch with those of Michelangelo, he says alike in lecture and in article: "In them (i. e. in Michelangelo's) the airiest pinnacles of sentiment and speculation are buttressed with solid mason-work of thought, of an actual, not fancied experience." In the lecture, he goes on: "You seem to feel the great

architect in them. Petrarch's in comparison are like the sugared frostwork upon cake." In the article, however, he adds to "fancied experience," "and the depth of feeling is measured by the sobriety and reserve of expression, while in Petrarch's all ingenuousness is frittered away into ingenuity. Both are cold, but the coldness of the one is self-restraint, while the other chills with pretence of warmth. In Michelangelo's you feel the great architect: in Petrarch's the artist who can best realize his conception in the limits of a cherry-stone."[1]

Again, it is evident from the comparison that Lowell's direct address in speaking to his class from the written lecture was in form of sentences little different from what he used when writing for the public. In each case, his spontaneity was uppermost; he was not especially aware, as he wrote, either of audience or of readers. In revising his articles for book publication he altered the impersonal *we* of the reviewer to the *I* of the author, and in doing so merely strengthened the natural voice in which he spoke. Such papers as "A Good Word for Winter," or "My Garden Acquaintance," are scarcely more direct in the relation of author and reader than are those papers which have the external form of book reviews. It was the personality of the man at home in a hospitable manner that found this expression, and just as some of his happiest letters were written to persons whom he scarcely knew, but happened to be

[1] "Rousseau," in *Literary Essays*, ii. 256.

called out by some apt occasion, so he wrote and lectured, except on the most formal themes, with a freedom which was neither disturbed nor excited by audience or readers. One may notice a difference in this respect between the political papers and the literary essays. The *I* scarcely is at home in the former.

The Dante Club had finished its task, and Longfellow's translation was published in 1867. The affectionate relation between the two men found more than one poetic expression during their long neighborly existence, and when Longfellow's sixtieth birthday occurred in 1867 Lowell wrote a poem, and printed it in the daily paper which he knew would be laid on Longfellow's breakfast-table. On the appearance of the Dante he wrote, with Mr. Norton, a joint review which appeared in the *North American*. Of his own brief part he wrote in humorous dismay to his collaborator: "I could only wish that the latter part had been more critical if it were but for Longfellow's sake. It 's lucky, perhaps, that I got almost crazy over the insertion I was to make in it, or I should have rushed into the thing myself — for, though I think his version (as you know) truly admirable, there are some things to be questioned in it. However, all the better that I could n't. I say I was almost crazy. You see I went up to Shady Hill — picking up Longfellow on the way — and it was *very* hot, and I brought away an armful of translations, just cutting out Howells, who was on the same errand. I came home with my prize, wet through

with the only sure result of all earthly toils, and began to compare. Good heavens! I had Cayley and Ford, and Dayman and Ramsay (and lots of others that made me 'd—' say), and Brooksbank and Wright, and last Rossetti. Well, I addled my brains over 'em — my tables were heaped, my floor stumbly with my a-versions, as I called them when I looked *at* them, my in-versions when I read them. Now, to begin with, I have read Dante so much that I can't remember a line of him — in short, 't was *infandum renovare dolorem.* I spent three days in bothering through what will make two pages."

The critical reviews of Longfellow's Dante from the hands of competent scholars were few, but one published in a daily journal called out a letter from Lowell to the friend who sent it to him, which gives with frankness Lowell's estimate of the translation. "The review," he writes, "does not change my opinion of Mr. Longfellow's translation — not as the best possible, by any means, but as the best probable. . . . Nobody who is intimate with the original will find any translation of the 'Divina Commedia' more refreshing than cobs. Has not Dante himself told us that no poetry can be translated? But, after all is said, I think Mr. Longfellow's the best thus far as being the most accurate. It is to be looked on, I think, as measured prose — like our version of Job, for example, though without that mastery of measure in which our Bible translators are unmatched except by Milton. I mean where they are at their best, as in Job, the songs of Debórah and Barak,

the death of Sisera, and some parts of the Psalms. Mr. Longfellow is not a scholar in the German sense of the word, that is to say, he is no pedant, but he certainly *is* a scholar in another and perhaps a higher sense, I mean in range of acquirement and the flavor that comes of it."

Specific criticism, with all the painstaking of which he was capable, was but the obverse of the medal which Lowell struck in his literary work. On the face was his generous delight in his books. "The Nightingale in the Study," written in the summer of 1867, holds in capital form a genuine confession that there was an appeal to him from nature in literature which did not antagonize the appeal made to him by the world of natural beauty, yet sometimes constrained and invited him in tones he could not resist, even though the birds without were calling him. Mr. Leslie Stephen who visited him in the summer of 1868, renewing an acquaintance begun five years earlier and ripening into a friendship which meant much to Lowell ever after, has given a pleasant account of the impression made upon him by the poet in his study at Elmwood. "All round us," he says, "were the crowded book-shelves, whose appearance showed them to be the companions of the true literary workman, not of the mere dilettante or fancy biographer. Their ragged bindings and thumbed pages scored with frequent pencil marks implied that they were a student's tools, not mere ornamental playthings. He would sit among his books, pipe in mouth, a book in hand, hour after hour; and I was soon

intimate enough to sit by him and enjoy intervals of silence as well as periods of discussion and always delightful talk." [1]

It was a quarter of a century since Lowell had collected his fugitive poems, though he had meantime published the second series of "The Biglow Papers," and when 1868 came in he was moved to make a new volume which should include the poems he had been printing, chiefly in the *Atlantic*. It was with this in mind that he took up a fragment of a poem written a score of years before, rewrote and added to it, designing to make it the title poem in the volume. He printed it first in the June *Atlantic*, under the title "A June Idyll." In sending it he wrote to Mr. Fields: "In the first flush of having just finished and copied it (for which I was obliged to miss Dickens last night) I am inclined to think there is something characteristic. . . . Surely there are good bits in it, and it is good for more than usual, or good for nothing. If I have n't made a spoon, I have certainly spoiled a horn that would have turned out a very good one. You sometimes find fault with my names. I have called this 'A June Idyll,' which is just what it is. Do you object?"

Mr. Fields, either himself or through a friend, wrote a very appreciative notice of the poem in the *Boston Advertiser*, which drew from Lowell this response to his friendly editor: —

> "Such a notice of my Iddle
> Met my eyes in the *Advertiser !*

[1] *Letters*, i. 408.

"To order,' thought I, 'no, fiddle!
'T is the dull world growing wiser.

"'My forehead they twine with bayses,
They 're eager to shout hosanna,
My style as pure epic they praises
Where they used to add acuanha.'

"''T is always their fate whom at christening
Your genuine Helicon 's spilt on;
Long ears are the latest at listening,
Vide Wordsworth *passim* on Milton.'

"So I read it aloud to my family,
One delicate phrase after t' other,
And surely the good little Sammle he
Was n't sadder at leaving his mother

"Than I when I came to the close of it,
For I wanted, as I 'm a sinner,
(Such poetry seemed in the prose of it)
To keep up my reading till dinner.

"But now, oh worst of collapses,
My Temple of Fame is in ruins,
Its forecourt, nave, transept, and apse is
A shelter for foxes and bruins!

"For all of my Public Opinion
With the wind in its sails to drive it
To the port of supreme dominion
Turns out most especially private.

"My Fame's accoucheur sadly yields his
Place up to the Deputy Cor'ner,
For my Public Opinion was Fields's,
My tradewind a puff from the 'Corner.'"

That the poem at once found disinterested friends is evident from the letter which Lowell writes in acknowledgment of the praise which the poet, Dr.

Parsons, gave it. "Something more than half of it," Lowell says, "was written more than twenty years ago, on the death of our eldest daughter; but when I came to complete it, that other death, which broke my life in two, *would* come in against my will, so that you were right in your surmise. I was very glad you liked it, and your letter touched me deeply, as you may well conceive."

In September Lowell made out a tentative list of the poems to be included in the volume, and wrote to Mr. Fields: "I think it best not to include any humorous poems in this collection. They can come by and by, if they are wanted. They would jar here. Some I may be able to shorten somewhat in printing, but commonly I find it hard work to improve them after they are dry, though I seem to see well enough where and how much they need it. The poems of the war I shall put by themselves at the end, so as to close with the Ode as I begin with the Idyll. How I do wish the whole of them were better — now that I am putting them between stiff covers to help them stand alone! 'Bad is the best' is a good proverb — but how if the best is bad? Well, here and there one catches a good strain, but I feel very hopeless about them."

Lowell meant to call his volume "A June Idyll and other Poems," but Mr. Fields pointed out that Whittier's new volume just about to appear was to carry the title of "A Summer Idyll." [1] Lowell

[1] After all Whittier changed his mind and gave his book the title "Among the Hills."

retorted: "Why the devil should Whittier bag my title? I can't claim a copyright in 'Idyll,' that is in the dictionary — but, June 'Idyll' was mine. It will be thought his poem suggested mine, as it was with the 'Present Crisis,' though mine was written two years before. However, J. G. W. is welcome to anything of mine, for he is a trump, and after all the milk is spilt. But if his volume is not advertised, might I not insist? It 's of more consequence to me than to him, for I have nothing else that will look so well in the vanguard. But if it 's all up, how would 'Appledore and other Poems' do? It is a pretty name enough, and the poem is one of my longest, — though not, perhaps, the one I would otherwise have put first. My dedication, I think, is good, and that will take the edge off."

Mr. Fields suggested that he should give the volume the title of his place, "Elmwood," but Lowell replied: "I can't bear 'Elmwood,' and the more I think of it, the more I can't bear it — 't is turning one's household gods upon the town, as it were. No, never! They have endured me for fifty years, and I won't desert 'em in their old age. Let me have my hermitage to myself. (I had eight visitors this morning — one of whom wanted me to read 'The Biglow Papers' to him.) But I have it now. Instead of 'June Idyll,' which was the *pis aller* of a prosaic mind, I shall call it 'Under the Willows.' Like all great discoveries, it is simple, and, you may depend upon it, it is *the* thing. It means everything and nothing. I can't make

the poem over so as to suit 'Elmwood,' and so I shall settle upon this, fixed as a butterfly, stable as the Horse-railway stables. You can't move me. The man that moved Chicago could n't move me. I am happy, and discharge my mind of the whole concern. I shall now devote my evening to the 'Flying Dutchman' in peace, and write you something clever for the *Atlantic*. I snap my fingers at you and Bazin,[1] wore he even the helmet of Mambrino. Nothing can touch me further. 'Under the Willows and other Poems' — it satisfies every want, and will be immensely popular. The basket-makers will buy up the first edition and the gunpowder makers the second. Then comes the general public, mad with curiosity to know what the d—l I mean. I am charmed with my own powers of invention. A duller man would have said 'Under the Elms,' or some such things. Let me alone for tickling the fancy of a purchaser. *I* know what they want."

To Mr. Norton he writes, reciting his tribulations over the name of his book, and adds: "I was suddenly moved to finish my 'Voyage to Vinland,' part of which you remember was written eighteen years ago.[2] I meant to have made it much longer, but maybe it is better as it is. I clapt a beginning upon it, patched it in the middle, and then got to what had always been my favorite part of the plan. This was to be a prophecy by Gudrida, a woman who went with them, of the future Amer-

[1] The bookbinder who wanted the lettering for the volume.

[2] Originally designed to make part of *The Nooning*.

ica. I have written in an unrhymed alliterated measure, in very short verse and stanzas of five lines each. It does not aim at following the law of the Icelandic alliterated stave, but hints at it and also at the *asonante*, without being properly either. But it runs well and is melodious, and we think it pretty good here, as does Howells."

Again we quote a passage from Emerson's unprinted journal, dated December, 1868: "In poetry, tone. I have been reading some of Lowell's new poems in which he shows unexpected advance on himself, but perhaps most in technical skill and courage. It is in talent rather than in poetic tone, and rather expresses his wish, his ambition, than the uncontrollable interior impulse which is the authentic mark of a new poem, and which is unanalyzable, and makes the merit of an ode of Collins or Gray or Wordsworth or Herbert or Byron, and which is felt in the pervading tone rather than in brilliant parts or lines; as if the sound of a bell, or a certain cadence expressed in a low whistle, or booming or humming to which the poet first timed his step as he looked at the sunset, or thought, was the incipient form of the piece, and was regnant through the whole."

There were two essays written in the fall of 1868 which are very expressive of Lowell's nature. "My Garden Acquaintance" records delightfully that attachment to one spot which was made possible not merely by long life at Elmwood, but by that sympathy with life which enabled him to suck the juices from nature, not by roving, but by that

attitude of listening and observing which sometimes belongs to home-keeping wits. "A Certain Condescension in Foreigners," though it was at first sight a clearing of his mind such as his letters repeatedly show, grows warm with that passion for his country and the ideas it stood for, which had been burned into him by his personal experience in the war and by his constant brooding over the deep realities which underlay the meaning of the war. He returned to political writing under stress of need for copy in the January *North American* with "A Look Before and After." The *Review* itself had become somewhat more of a burden to him, for Mr. Norton went abroad in the summer of 1868 for an indefinite stay, and though Mr. E. W. Gurney, who took his place, was competent, Lowell felt the responsibility rather more than when he had easily left the main business to Mr. Norton. Moreover, the special work which he and his friend had undertaken had, in a measure, been accomplished, and the *Review*, though winning a *succes d'estime*, had not that worldly success which reconciles one to drudgery. There is a half-vexed, half-humorous letter to Mr. Fields, dated Elmwood 10 P. M. Thursday, 1868, which was 24 September. "The express has just brought," he writes, "your note asking for the log of the *North American* on her present voyage. The N. A. is teak-built, her extreme length from stem to stern post 299 feet 6 inches, and her beam (I mean her breadth of beam) 286 feet 7 inches and a quarter. She is an A 1 *risk* at the Antediluvian. These statements

will enable you to reckon her possible rate of sailing. During the present trip I should say that all the knots she made were Gordian, and of the tightest sort. I extract from log as follows : —

"11 July. Lat. 42° 1′, the first officer, Mr. Norton, lost overboard in a fog, with the compass, caboose, and studden-sails in his pocket, also the key of the spirit-room.

"25 July. Lat. 42° 10′, spoke the Ark, Captain Noah, and got the latest news. 26, 27, 28, dead calm. 29, 30, 31, and 1 August, head winds N. N. E. to N. E. by N. 15 August. Double reef in foretopsl, spoke the good ship Argo, Jason commander, from Colchos with wool.

"17 August, dead calm, schooner Pinta, Capt. Columbus, bound for the New World, and a market, bearing Sou Sou West half South on our weather bow. Got some stores from him.

"20. Capt. Lowell cut his throat with the fluke of the sheet anchor.

"So far the log.

"Now for the comment. Toward the 1st September I received notice that the *Review* was at a standstill. Mr. Gurney was at Beverly, ill and engaged to be married. I had not a line of copy, nor knew where to get one. I communicated with G. and got what he had — viz: two articles, one on Herbert Spencer, and t'other on Leibnitz. I put the former in type, but did not dare to follow with the latter, for I thought it would be too much even for the readers of the N. A. By and by, I raked together one or two more, — not what I

would have but what I *could*. James's article on 'Spanish G.'[1] is good and ought to go in. So of the Siege of Delhi. We want *something* interesting, and we must have some literary notices. As I receive none of the books, of course I had to depend on others for these, and I have got as many as I could. I have edited the number for October because it was absolutely necessary, — not, surely, because I desired it. I have read all the proof and have done all that I agreed *not* to do when I made my engagement with Crosby & Nichols. All I promised to give them was my name on the cover, and I supposed T. & F. succeeded to their agreement. I have much more than kept my word. The October number can't be printed by Saturday.

"But I am altogether willing that it should be, only in that case my name must be withdrawn from the cover. I never desired to be its editor, and I put my resignation in your hands. Get some better man, say ——, who can write on all subjects equally ill at a moment's notice. I wash my hands of the whole concern. I will read the rest of the proof of this number if you wish, for that is in the bond, but for January look out for somebody who can make something out of nothing. I recommend ——." Six days later he wrote again: —

"Correct estimates from log thus: 25 September. Lat. 42° 10′. Captain Lowell committed suicide by blowing out his brains with the gaff-topsl halyards. There can be no doubt of the fact,

[1] George Eliot's *The Spanish Gipsy*.

as the 2nd officer recognized the brains for his (Cap. L.'s), he being familiar with them.

"30 September. Captain L. reappeared on the deck, having only been below to oversee the storage of ballast, whereof on this trip the lading mainly consists. What was thought to be his brains turned out on closer examination to be pumpkin pie, though the second officer was unconvinced and the Captain himself could not make up his mind.

"The fact is I was cross, and did not quite like being brought up with such a round turn at my time of life. I had done all I could, and was hoping that the literary notices would make up for the rest. I had been disappointed in three body articles by Bigelow, Poole, and Willard (on von Bismarck). Gurney will take hold of the next number and it will all go right. Say beforehand how many sheets you are willing to allow, and we will keep as near the wind as we can, but don't — well, never mind, but I am as touchy as if I were even poorer than I am."

The publication of "Under the Willows" brought Lowell some of those expressions of admiration and affection for which the friends of a writer gladly use such occasions. The publishing of a book is like an announcement of an engagement, — an opportunity for one's friends to show their affection unreservedly. Among the notes which pleased Lowell was one from Mr. Aldrich who had lately come to Boston to edit *Every Saturday*, and in his pleasure he sent a copy of the special edition of the Commemoration Ode with this letter.

ELMWOOD, 23rd December, 1868.

MY DEAR SIR, — That note was so pleasant to an old fellow who does n't think too well of himself, that I can't help (with a very good will and a very balky pen) telling you how much pleasure it gave me. That I don't deserve all the fine things you say of me does n't make it any the less friendly in you to say them, and I, for one, frankly confess that I like a little *lubrication* now and then. It makes our machine (as they used to call it in the last century) run easier for a day or two, till its general ramshackliness reproduces the familiar friction.

Now lest the twins should repeat the tragedy of Eteocles and Polynikes, and the house of Aldrich be extinguished in an internecine duel for the possession of that other fatal volume, I send what will enable your paternal anxiety to make a fair division between them. If they are proper twins (I am a kind of twins myself divided between grave and gay) they will be the one sentimental and t' other humorous. Bequeath one sacred tome to each, and keep for yourself the cordial feeling that sends both.

This which you now receive has at least the value of rarity. It is one of twelve copies printed in this form. Think of me after I am gone on (for in the nature of things you will survive me) as one who had a really friendly feeling for everything human. It is better to be a good fellow than a good poet, and perhaps (I am not sure) I might have shown a pretty fair talent that way, with

proper encouragement. Any how, I wish you and Mrs. Aldrich, and *the* Twins a Merry Christmas, and am Cordially yours,

J. R. Lowell.

That Lowell himself knew how to give pleasure with praise is evident enough from the several letters which Mr. Norton has printed, to Mr. Aldrich, to Mr. Howells, to Mr. Gilder, and to other younger writers. He was constantly sending pleasant messages and writing notes with unaffected expressions of enjoyment, and his friendly feeling made it easy for the editor of the *Atlantic* to consult him with reference to contributions even from strangers. Thus he wrote to Mr. Howells: "I would be burned at the stake — nay, I would agree to be shut up alone for an hour with —— before I would acknowledge (I spelt it without a d!) a poem to be good unless it was so. I would be burned at two stakes, and be shut up with —— and —— ere I would say a good word for the verses of a *rising* young author. But I expect to see and like your poem in the next *Atlantic*. It *is* good, despite Mrs. Howells and the anapests, — or whatever other kind of pests they were.

"Go by your ear, my dear boy, or by Madam's and leave Latin prosodies to —— and the other profound scholars who understand 'em, but be sure that the plot of your little poem is so charming that it will take all the lovers and loved, and who else is worth caring for?

"I tried it on Mrs. Lowell (you know we have

a bit of Darby and Joan left in us still) and she purred at once. No: it is good and subtle (or subtile, I don't know which, thanks to Mr. Nichols), but it is either you like.

"P. S. You have a real vein, so don't be bothered, but make it as good as you can and thank the gods."

And again, in answer to some questions Mr. Howells had asked him respecting the Isles of Shoals, apropos of the articles by Mrs. Thaxter then to appear in the *Atlantic:* "'Londoner's' is right. The names of the islands are 'Haley's,' otherwise (and better) 'Smutty-nose,' 'Star,' always called 'Star-island,' 'Hog,' which Mrs. T. no doubt calls 'Appledore,' — the name of a village that once stood on it, — 'Cedar,' 'White,' 'Malaga,' and 'Duck.' There you have 'em all.

"Now I have a favor to ask of you — *Se io meritai di voi assai o poco* — and that is to have the sheets of the life of Landor sent me. I guess I could make something out of them, which perhaps you *boys* hardly could. By the way, I was very much pleased with your notice of that fellow's (Sebright,[1] I think) Congressional reminiscences. It made me laugh, and was so fine (so subtile) that the man himself, despite his name, will never feel the edge of it. I always had great expectations of you, — but I am beginning to believe in you for good. You are the only one that has n't cheated me by your blossom. I like your flavor now, as once I did your perfume. You young fellows are

[1] It was Gobright's *Recollections.*

dreadfully irreverent — but don't you laugh — I take a kind of credit to myself in being the first to find you out. I am proud of you. But see how Fate takes me down! As I wrote the words, it began to rain on my hay. *Absit omen.* And may it be long before you are mown!

"As for your gigantic *boongalong* there in Boston, — I fancy it is like Niagara, a thing that one can reckon mathematically. It is but one voice raised to the nth power or so. And I remember that the Colosseum was where the early Christians used to be martyred. Now I got up this morning at half past six, and therefore count myself among the early Christians.

"I forgot to tell you that George Curtis liked your Venetian poem very much. So did I."

His position naturally made him the recipient of many commissions for securing the publication of poems and other manuscripts, and his friendliness drew him into many letters of counsel, and it might be encouragement. To one whose acquaintance he had made through a contribution which he had accepted when editor of the *Atlantic*, he wrote in answer to a letter in which she had confessed to discouragement over hostile attack on a more recent work: —

That my note gave you any pleasure gives me a sensible satisfaction. I am glad to find it *was* my Miss —— after all.

You must n't be disheartened. If you had written a foolish thing, don't you see? — nobody would

be attacking it. People don't bring artillery to bear on soap-bubbles, but wait till they burst of themselves. Don't allow yourself to be shaken from that equipoise of good sense and good temper that drew my attention so strongly in your first article. Above all, don't be drawn into any controversy. Keep straight on, as if nothing had happened, and if you have anything in you be sure the world will find it out. Publicity is one of the painful necessities of authorship. For my own part, I would give all the praise I ever received for the right to be valued simply for my personal good qualities alone. But you must resign yourself. You have given everybody who can command pen, ink, and paper the right to talk flippantly and ignorantly and unfeelingly of things into which you have put your very heart's blood. But don't be disheartened. If you honestly *try to think* (and it was because you seemed to me to do so that I felt an interest in you) you will come out right in the long run. If you have the true quality you will at last get the power of *thinking*, the only abiding satisfaction and security for happiness which this life or the other for that matter affords, a thing rarer than is generally supposed. Really to think is to see things as they are, and when we have once got firm foot-hold on that rock of ages, our own little trials and triumphs take their true proportions, and are as indifferent to us, morally, I mean, as the changes of the weather. I think you have the root of the matter in you, that is, that you are in earnest to do honest work, and not to

flaunt in the newspapers. For that reason I wish to help you all I can. Don't think I am writing such letters as this every week. On the contrary, I am shy of writing letters at all, especially to women. But whenever a word from me will cheer you, you shall have it.

I have directed two books to be sent you by express and beg you to accept them as a token of sincere esteem from your friend,

J. R. Lowell.

There is another letter drawn out from him by a stranger who was concerned over a case of literary honesty, which is interesting as showing how sensitive Lowell was in all matters pertaining to his art. "You ask," he writes, "my judgment on a point of literary morals. In the case you set forth I find it hard to judge of the facts without some knowledge of the character of the man, because thoughtlessness, want of moral sensibility, and loose habits of mind generally, may in the particular instance tend to lenify our judgment of the ethical quality of the offence, without in the least changing our opinion of its discreditable nature as respects good scholarship and honest literature. There can be no question that every article (such as you describe) should have had the name of its true author at the head of it, so that no man who read could fail to know whose work he was reading. Nay, I think we should be so scrupulous in such matters as to acknowledge even an apt quotation when we owe it to another man. For example, I

suppose I must have read the 'Divinia Commedia' of Dante at least thirty times with minute attention and yet it had never occurred to me that *cima di giudizie* was literally Shakespeare's phrase, 'top of judgment,' till Mr. Dyce pointed it out in a note on 'Measure for Measure.' I should never think of using it as an illustration without giving credit to Mr. Dyce. Even had I found the coincidence noted on the margin of my own copy of Dante, I should still have quoted Dyce for it as having first mentioned it in print, in order to avoid even the appearance of evil. I think an honest man can easily resolve any doubt he may have in such matters by asking himself the simple question, Do I gain any credit that does not belong to me by letting it pass for my own? If I do, it is stealing, neither more nor less, for there is no real distinction between picking a man's pocket of his money and filching the fruits of his industry or thought from a book.

"In literature proper, originality consists of such an energy of nature as enables a man so to infuse thoughts or sentiments common to all with his own individuality as to give them a new character — flavor would be the better word — commending them anew to the general palate. Chaucer is a capital instance in point. He formed himself wholly on foreign models, helped himself to plots, incidents, and reflections from any and everywhere, and yet is on the whole fresher than almost any of our poets. I always liked him the better for remembering in his 'House of Fame' the pipes of those

'little heardgromes
That kepen bestes in the bromes,'

for he was, I doubt not, paying the debt he owed to some nameless minstrel.

"In matters of research and scholarship, the question seems to present itself under a somewhat different aspect. All *learning* is of necessity to a great extent second-hand — but here also there is a manifest distinction between *appropriating* another man's scholarship and *assimilating* it. In the one case it lies a mere load of indigestible rubbish upon the brain; in the other, it is dissolved and worked over into a new substance, giving sustenance and impulse to one's native thought. So that after all, whether in literature or scholarship, the point is not so much what a man has taken, as whether he has made something new of what he has taken.[1] If he have *not*, then he should make punctilious acknowledgment of the sources whence he drew. It is one thing to be indebted to a man for a hint that sets us on a path of original research and discovery, and quite another to rob him of his journals and publish them as one's own. So as to giving credit where it is due; I would not thank a guide-post, but I must pay a guide. I may read by a man's lamp, but if I tap his gas pipe, I ought to attach a gasometer that shall record precisely how much I borrow.

"The leading case in this branch of literary ethics is the famous one of Schelling *et als.* against

[1] Lowell amplified this thought in his paper on Chaucer, *Literary Essays*, iii. 299, 300.

Coleridge. For the defence we should take into account the defendant's lifelong habits of mental dissipation, his own really great learning which might make him careless alike in borrowing and lending, and above all the effect of opium in blurring the memory and deadening the nerves of moral sensation. On the other hand, it would be urged that he *lifted* (to borrow a word, peculiarly apt here, from the loose dialect of the border) from foreigners whose property would be least liable to identification by his countrymen; he did it by translation and transfusion, thus, as it were, obliterating the marks of former ownership; and above all (in the case of A. W. Schlegel) he did it in oral lectures, thus driving his stolen cattle so hurriedly by in a way to baffle detection.

"You will find in Mrs. Nelson Coleridge's Introduction to the 'Biographia Literaria' an eloquent and even passionate vindication of her father from the charge of plagiarism. It does her honor as a daughter, but is hardly convincing. Coleridge's acknowledgment of general indebtedness to Schelling and others was, to speak mildly, wholly inadequate, and his evasions in regard to Schlegel leave a very painful impression on the mind. If he was not lying, he was so shamefully inaccurate in dates (to his own advantage) as to have all the appearance of it.

"Now, your case (I mean the one you present) is in many respects very like this — almost identical with it indeed. . . .

"In the old trials, one of the questions on which

the jury were called on to pass was, 'Did he fly for it?' That is, I suppose, 'Did he give that proof of conscious guilt?' I should ask the same question in this case. Is there any evidence of an attempt at concealment?

"But, abstractedly from any opinion we may form of the *person*, the action was one altogether discreditable and contemptible. We cannot be too scrupulous on any point of morals in a country where members of Congress see no dishonor in selling appointments to the Army and Navy."

Dr. Thomas Hill, who was president of Harvard in 1868, asked Lowell in the summer of that year to look over some papers he had received from Virginia and to give his opinion of them. They were the letters and journals of a Virginian gentleman, Mr. John B. Minor, who had visited New England in 1834, and Lowell found them exceedingly interesting. "Not the least engaging thing in the journal," he wrote to the lady who had sent the papers, "is the character of the author, everywhere showing itself and everywhere amiable. So far as he is concerned, the whole journal might be printed *verbatim*, for there is not an indiscreet word, much less a breach of hospitality, from beginning to end. At the same time there are, of course, passages here and there which should be omitted in printing — I think not more than two or three at most — where he describes the personal appearance of those he met."

The next day he wrote to Mr. Fields: "There has been put into my hands to dispose of, the

Journal of a Virginia gentleman during a short tour in New England, partly on foot. The date — 1834, which is now ages ago. There is not a great deal of it, but I found it truly entertaining. I think I could make selections from it that would run through four or five numbers of the *Atlantic*. . . . Now, do you want it? and if so, what do you think it would be worth? When I say it is entertaining, I do not mean for fanatics like me, who would cradle I know not how many tons of common earth for a grain of the gold of human nature, but for folks in general. It is not only interesting but valuable, and the character of the author, as it blinks out continually, most engaging. It seems to me remarkable that there is positively not an ill-natured word from the first page to the last. Now you know that I have once or twice pressed Sibylline books upon you which you would n't take. Don't let this one slip through your fingers. I think it might be published afterwards in a small volume with advantage, but of its adaptation to the *Atlantic* I have no doubt."

The journal was printed in the *Atlantic* in the summer and fall of 1870, Lowell furnishing an introduction to the first number. It was no doubt under the influence of this new acquaintance with a fine type of Southern manhood, that Lowell wrote to Mr. Godkin, 20 November, 1868: "I confess to a strong sympathy with men who sacrificed everything even to a bad cause, which they could see only the good side of; and now the war is over, I see no way to heal the old wounds but by frankly

admitting this and acting upon it. We can never reconstruct the South except through its own leading men, nor ever hope to have them on our side till we make it for their interest and compatible with their honor to be so." [1]

Mr. and Mrs. Fields were proposing to make a journey to Europe in the spring and summer of 1869, and asked Lowell to send his daughter in their company. Lowell wrote in reply, 19 January, 1869: "I have been thinking over your very kind invitation to Mabel, and, after turning it in every possible way, I have come to the conclusion that the only way to treat a generous offer is to be generous enough to accept it. My pride stood a little in the way, but my common sense whispered me that I had no right to feed my pride at my daughter's expense. And moreover, my dear Fields, you left me a most delicate loophole for my pride to creep out of, in conferring on me a kind of militia generalship of the *Atlantic Monthly* while you were away. Now, if you will let me make it something real, that is, if you will let me read the proof-sheets, I can be of some service in preventing —— (for example, merely) from writing such awful English, and mayhap in some other cases, as a consulting physician. Moreover, I should like to translate for *Every Saturday* some-

[1] *Letters*, ii. 5. There was a reciprocity of feeling, if we may judge from the striking fact that on the right, within the gate which leads to the impressive common tomb of the Army of Tennessee, in New Orleans, is an inscription taken from Lowell's poem, "On the Capture of Fugitive Slaves near Washington."

"Before Man made us citizens, great Nature made us men."

thing now and then, as, for instance, the article on Déak and the dramatic sketch of Octave Feuillet, lately published in the *Revue de Deux Mondes*. May I?"

While his daughter was travelling with Mr. and Mrs. Fields, Lowell wrote to Mr. Fields a piece of news anticipative of what came to an event a little less than ten years later: "Mabel's letters overrun with happiness, which I fully share in reading them. I wrote her a long letter about nothing yesterday — but I did not tell her what you may (*as a secret for you three*), that I came very near being sent to Spain, and that in case the Senate should not confirm Sickles in December, the chances for me are the best. Judge Hoar told me when he was here the other day, that Mr. Fish was friendly, and that the Assistant Secretary was 'zealous even unto slaying,' as he was himself. So who knows but my name may get into capitals in the triennial catalogues yet? That, after all, is the main thing — for is it not a kind of fame as good as the next? For my own part, I can conceive of no place better to live or die in than where I was born.

"I hope Mabel makes a jolly companion. She always does for *me*.[1] If she is as happy as her letters show her, I think she must. Tell her I should have told her about Spain — but I forgot it. I shall have my choice of castles to live in, if I go there, of my own building."

"For awhile last spring," he wrote in December

[1] Perhaps it was on this journey that she told Mrs. Fields she never thought of her father as a poet, but just her father.

to Mr. Norton, "I thought it possible I might be sent abroad. Hoar was strenuous for it, and I should have been very glad of it then. . . . However, it all fell through, and I am glad it did, for I should not have written my new poem."[1] The new poem was "The Cathedral" which was issued in book form at Christmas, 1869, as well as in the *Atlantic* for January, 1870. He wrote it during the summer vacation and took great pleasure in the writing. He had told Mr. Howells what he was about, and on being asked for the poem for the *Atlantic* replied: "Up to time, indeed! the fear is not about time, but space. You won't have room in your menagerie for such a displeaseyousaurus. The verses, if stretched end to end in a continuous line, would go clear round the Cathedral they celebrate, and nobody (I fear) the wiser. I can't tell yet what they are. There seems a bit of clean carving here and there, a solid buttress or two, and perhaps a gleam through painted glass — but I have not copied it out yet, nor indeed read it over consecutively."[2] A little later he could write to Miss Norton: "The poem turned out to be something immense, as the slang is nowadays, that is, it ran on to eight hundred lines of blank verse. I hope it is good, for it fairly trussed me at last and bore me up as high as my poor lungs will bear into the heaven of invention. I was happy writing it, and so steeped in it that if I had written to you it would have been in blank verse. It is a kind of religious poem, and is

[1] *Letters*, ii. 52.

[2] *Letters*, ii. 35.

called 'A Day at Chartres,'"[1] He dedicated the poem with special pleasure to Mr. Fields, who by the bye had persuaded him to substitute the name used for that he had chosen, a change which Lowell regretted in writing to Mr. Stephen, as depriving the poem of certain definite, local, and historical justification. "The Cathedral" drew from Mr. Ruskin warm praise. "The main substance of the poem is most precious to me," he wrote, "and its separate lines sometimes unbetterable," and he added some specific criticism on words, which Lowell met with more of his favorite instances of long-lived words brought over in the mental baggage of the early New England settlers. The letter in which he conclusively justifies himself is an excellent example of the reasoning of a philologist to whom words are alive, and not specimens in a museum.[2]

A correspondent had enquired in behalf of a friend, as had Ruskin, for his authority in using "decuman" in the line

"Spume-sliding down the baffled decuman,"

and he replied: "My friendly catechist has certainly put in a fair claim to a speedy answer. Whence that word 'decuman' got into my memory I have no notion. It seems to have got embedded there during my eocene period, and hopped out lively as one of those toads we have all heard of the moment it got a chance. And the likeness

[1] *Letters*, ii. 38.

[2] See *Letters*, ii. 64–67. Also the Cambridge edition of Lowell's poems, p. 479.

was the nearer that it had 'a precious jewel in its head.' In short, the word was there — it was canorous, and it expressed just what I meant. So I used it unsuspiciously. I did not mean to make a conundrum — I never do, but I had made one. When I was asked for the solution, the answer was ready enough — 'the tenth wave,' which was thought higher than the rest. But when I was asked for my authority! I thought I had met with it in Ovid. No! In Lucan. No! They both speak of the tenth wave, but not in that absolute way. I looked in my dictionaries. I found it at last in Forcellini. Then I went to my Ducange, and the authority cited was one of the Latin Fathers, I forget which. However, there it was, and with the meaning I had remembered."

Although the title, "A Day at Chartres," carries with it a notion of less formality, and has a picturesque quality, there is a fitness in the soberer title that permits the mind to play with the theme. For Lowell here builds upon the foundation of human life a fane for worship, and in the speculations which discriminate between the conventional and the free aspirations of the soul, constructs out of living stones a house of prayer. Nor is there absent that capricious mood which carved grotesques upon the under side of the benches at which the worshippers kneeled, so that when the reader, borne along by the high thought, stumbles over such lines as

> "Who, meeting Cæsar's self, would slap his back,
> Call him 'Old Horse' and challenge to a drink,"

he may, if he will, console himself with the reflection that the most aspiring Gothic carries like grimacing touches within its majestic walls.

"Imagination's very self in stone."

That is the epithet Lowell bestows on Chartres Cathedral, and in the few spirited lines in which he contrasts the Greek with the Goth, and hints at the historic evolution of the latter, he is in a large way reflecting the native constitution of his own mind,

"Still climbing, luring fancy still to climb."

In the letters which Lowell wrote when "The Cathedral" was stirring his mind one sees most impressively the struggle which was always more or less racking him of an unfulfilled poetic power. The very spontaneity of his nature was in a way an obstacle to expression. He waited for the waters to be troubled, he was critical of his moods, of his opportunities, and when the moment was seized, if he could indeed hold it, he was supremely happy. "How happy I was while I was writing it," he says just as the poem is to be published; "for weeks it and I were alone in the world till Fanny well-nigh grew jealous." And yet in the very memory of this bliss he is haunted by the thought of that black care which rides behind. "You don't know, my dear Charles, what it is to have sordid cares, to be shivering on the steep edge of your bank-book, beyond which lies debt. I am willing to say it to you, because I know I should have written more and better. They say it

is good to be obliged to do what we don't like, but I am sure it is not good for me — it wastes so much time in the mere forethought of what you are to do." The matter was not made easier by the pride and honorable resolve not to mortgage the future for the sake of some present indulgence. Lowell went without things he wanted rather than get into debt for them, and though he chafed under the conditions which compelled him to the doing of irksome tasks, he would borrow no short-lived ease. In making up an account with Mr. Fields at the close of 1869, when he found himself on the wrong side of the ledger, he wrote: "You must allow me also to clear off the rest . . . as soon as I can. There is no earthly reason why I should n't, and a great many why I should. I hate any kind of money obligations between friends. When I have paid this off, the kindness will be left, and the obligation gone. I shall be able to manage it before long. I never could see any reason why poets should claim immunity beyond other folks. It is not wholesome for them." Even in petty matters he disliked exceedingly to be under pecuniary obligation. His letters to Mr. Godkin, as printed by Mr. Norton, show an unconquerable aversion to being a "deadhead" under any circumstances, and I remember once, when I went with him to the Museum of Fine Arts for some special exhibition, his annoyance at finding it was a free day and he could not pay the ordinary toll.

His prose work, in 1869, included his papers on Chaucer and Pope, and his "Good Word for Win-

ter," and at the end of the year he issued a selection from what he had already written, in the first series of "Among My Books." But his slowly growing collection of published writings did not add materially to his income, and he continued to be embarrassed by the poverty of a landholder who had heavy taxes to pay and only the meagrest return from the productive part of his estate. The only relief he could foresee was in the possible sale of some of his land.

The point to be noted, however, is that with all this pressure of need, Lowell knew himself so well that he would not, even when a golden bait was dangled before him, accept invitations to write which required of him the diligence and the punctuality of the hack workman. No. He would attend to his college duties, do what he could for the *North American*, and accept the occasional opportunity which offered for reading a lecture. He honored his art, and he refused to make it a perfunctory task. His old friend Robert Carter was now editor of *Appleton's Journal*, and very naturally sought contributions from Lowell, but Lowell replied in a letter written 11 March, 1870:

"Many thanks for your *Journal*, which I have looked through with a great deal of pleasure, and which I should think likely to do good in raising the public taste.

"I am much obliged to you also for your proposal, though I cannot accept it. I have not time. I have not that happy gift of inspired knowledge so common in this country, and work more and

more slowly toward conclusions as I get older. I give on an average twelve hours a day to study (after my own fashion), but I find real knowledge slow of accumulation. Moreover, I shall be too busy in the college for a year or two yet. It is not the career I should have chosen, and I half think I was made for better things — but I must make the best of it. Between ourselves, I declined lately an offer of $4000 a year from —— to write four pages monthly in ——.

"It takes me a good while to be sure I am right. A five or six page notice in the next N. A. R.[1] will have cost me a fortnight's work of a microscopic kind. My pay must be in a sense of honest thoroughness."

Lowell lectured in the spring of 1870 at Baltimore, and before the students of Cornell University. In the summer he enjoyed much making the personal acquaintance of Thomas Hughes, who visited America at this time. Lowell had known him by correspondence, and Hughes, who was an ardent admirer of Lowell and had introduced the "Biglow Papers" to the English public, somewhat embarrassed the author of those poems by quoting from them on all occasions. For his work he gave himself to the reading of old French metrical romances, but the year saw scarcely any product, though at its close he brought together a group of indoor and outdoor studies under the title of "My Study Windows." "I long to give myself to poetry again," he writes in October to

[1] On Goodwin's *Plutarch's Morals*.

Miss Norton, "before I am so old that I have only thought and no music left. I can't say as Milton did, 'I am growing my wings.'" There is a phrase noting a curious consciousness he had at this time in a letter to Mr. Norton, written 15 October, 1870: "I wrote Jane yesterday a kind of letter, but you must wait till my ships come in before I can write the real thing. I can't get rid of myself enough when I am worried as I am a good part of the time. It is curious, when I am in company I watch myself as if I were a third person, and *hear the sound of my own voice*, which I never do in a natural mood. However, I shall come out of it all in good time."

His old correspondent, Mr. Richard Grant White, published this year his "Words and their Uses," and wrote to Lowell, asking permission to dedicate the book to him. Lowell replied: —

Elmwood, 2 August, 1870.

My dear Sir, — In the midst of my sallow grass and my leaves crumpled with drought, a little spring seemed to bubble up at my feet in your letter. How could I feel other than pleased and honored with your proposal? I wish only I deserved it better — but anyhow I can't find it in my heart to wave aside my crown out of modesty, lest Anthony might not offer it again. So I put it on my head with many thanks, consoled with the reflection that a wreath unmerited always avenges itself by looking confoundedly like a foolscap in the eyes of every one but the wearer. So I bow

my head meekly to your laurels, and thank you very heartily for an honor as agreeable as it is unexpected. I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that the deserved popularity of your book will carry my name into many a pleasant home where it is now unfamiliar, and if my publisher's accounts show a better figure hereafter, I shall say it is your doing.

With a very sincere acknowledgment of the obligation you lay upon me to do some credit to your second leaf,

I remain, my dear Sir,
Very cordially yours,
J. R. Lowell.

Richard Grant White, Esq.

After some delays attendant on such business, Lowell was able in the summer of 1871 to make a sale of a portion of the original estate of Elmwood which left him the house and a couple of acres for his home, and an income of four or five thousand dollars a year. It was a modest living, but it cleared his mind of fretting cares. As he wrote to Mr. Stephen: "It is a life-preserver that will keep my head above water, and the swimming I will do for myself." Of the effect upon his mind he wrote more freely to his friend Mr. Norton: "I cannot tell you how this sense of my regained paradise of Independence enlivens me. It is something I have not felt for years — hardly since I have been a professor. The constant sense of a ball and chain jangling at my heels, and that those who are inexpressibly dear to me were at the risk

of my giving satisfaction in an office where what is best in me was too often held in abeyance by an uneasy self-consciousness forced upon me by my position, have been greater hindrances than anybody else can ever know. But now I can draw a full breath of natural air and discarbonate my lungs of the heavy atmosphere of an unnatural confinement. I look forward to my next year's work with cheerfulness. I am no longer chained to the oar, but a volunteer. Whether I shall recover the wholesome mental unrest which kept me active when I was younger, I know not, but at least I shan't have to print before I am ready, nor to keep on with the spendthrift habit of splitting up the furniture of my brain to keep the pot boiling. . . . I mean to come abroad at the end of the next college year, and shall pop in on you some day, bringing a familiar odor, half Cambridge, half pipe. I shall read you my new poem — when it gets written — and bore you with old French in which I am still plunged to the ears. I am become a pretty thorough master of it, and wish I knew the modern lingo half as well."

"It takes a good while," he writes to Miss Norton, "to slough off the effect of seventeen years of pedagogy. I am grown learned (after a fashion) and dull. The lead has entered into my soul. But I have great faith in putting the sea between me and the stocks I have been sitting in so long." He worked steadily at his college duties, with some thought, I suspect, of finishing with his professorial work, the laboriously learned part of his

life. The minute, painstaking care to which he gave to the studies which underlay his college work, so evident in the annotation of his books, was after all a severe drain upon a nature that took the greatest delight in imaginative freedom. He seems hardly to have allowed himself any relief. "I have been reading over your book[1] again," he writes to Mr. Fields, 29 February, 1872, "and found it very interesting and queer. Queer, I say, because it is the first volume I have read for some months later than the XIV. century, and I was a little puzzled at first, like Selkirk when he got back among his own people and heard his own language again. I am glad you have left out the imaginary nephew. One was apt to stumble over him and apologize with a 'Beg pardon, but really had forgotten you were here.' These buffers between the reader and the first personal pronoun never lessen the shock, though they are always in the way. But nobody wants them, for egotism does not consist in never so many capital *I's*. Moreover, I am persuaded that everybody likes it in his secret heart (as he does garlic), and says he does n't for appearances.

"Your Dickens letters are a great deal more interesting than Forster's for some reason or other. I fancy it is because they are more natural. In writing to Forster, Dickens must have felt that he was writing to his biographer, and had the constraint of sitting before a glass. Indeed, I was

[1] *Yesterdays with Authors*, published first in the *Atlantic*, where Lowell also read it, as "Our Whispering Gallery."

very much disappointed in Forster's volume.[1] It does n't leave an agreeable impression, which is surely a fault in biography.

"What a dear old affectionate soul Miss Mitford was! I knew nothing about her before. Even her little vanities are rather pleasant than otherwise. It is surely a delightful gift to be made happy as easily as she.

"We are all busy getting ready for Mabel's departure. I hate to think of it, though I believe she is as safe as human forethought could make her. Burnett is all I could wish."

Miss Lowell was married 2 April, 1872, to Mr. Edward Burnett, and went with him to Southboro, Massachusetts, where he was carrying on a dairy and stock farm. Miss Rebecca Lowell died in May, so that the household at Elmwood was in a measure dissolved. Lowell was busy up to the last over the long article on Dante which he contributed to the July *North American*. He was released from his college work, having resigned his professorship; he let Elmwood to Mr. Aldrich and sailed 9 July for Europe with Mrs. Lowell, to be absent two years.

[1] The first volume of Forster's *Dickens* was published in advance of the others.

CHAPTER XII

THIRD JOURNEY IN EUROPE

1872–1874

When Lowell went to Europe in the summer of 1872, he left his college routine behind him; with his new-found liberty, he seemed to find all the expression he cared for in familiar talk with the many friends, old and new, whom he encountered in his travels, and in letters to friends at home and abroad. Once only, as will be seen, did he break into poetry, but the two years of his absence contain so little to add to the record of his production that it seems the natural course, as it is most pleasant to the biographer, to let this holiday in Lowell's life be told for the most part in his letters. The letters printed by Mr. Norton[1] are not drawn upon, except now and then for a needful phrase.

To Thomas Hughes.

Royal Victoria Hotel, Killarney,
20 July, 1872.

My dear Hughes, — Finding I could land in Queenstown, I did so with most infinite discomfort, and here I am in Ireland, having on my way

[1] *Letters*, ii. pp. 81–128.

hither done Blarney Castle which is well-nigh as good as Kenilworth. Here, to my surprise, I find a gigantic new R. C. Cathedral, See of the Bishop of Kerry. However, I am not writing a guide-book. I wish to ask if you are in London, and how long you will remain. I am of two minds, — one to go straight to the Continent, the other to stay a week or two in London in lodgings and see things quietly in that blessed season when everybody is out of town. You I "lot" upon seeing. Will you write me at the Grosvenor Hotel, Chester (where I shall turn up by and by), and let me know? I am not even sure if Parliament have adjourned. Think of it! Just like our Yankee impudence, is n't it? But the truth is, the last paper I saw was dated 9th July, and I hate to make acquaintance again with the World and its goings-on.

I must run to my breakfast, or rather to Madame, of whom I have visions wandering disconsolate in search of me who am ensconced in the smoking-room, where I happened to see an inkstand last night.

In the hope of seeing you soon,

Affectionately yours always,

J. R. Lowell.

To the Same.

Chester, 28 July, 1872.

Your letter and I arrived here together last night. We shall stay here three or four days to recruit from the Irish accent, — which somehow wearied me wonderfully.

If lodgings may be had by the week, to renew or no at will, you would greatly oblige me by taking plain and inexpensive ones for us, where I can let my cup fill again from a tap that rather dribbles than runs. Travelling, I find, drains. A pleasant landlady I should prefer to splendor. I get more than enough of that in the hotels. . . .

If you should find lodgings, I will engage them, beginning with Friday next. If I once get a perch to which I can return at need, I can take short flights wherever I will, without such heaps of luggage. Will you telegraph or write me here? If no lodgings, tell me of some quiet hotel, — not on the American caravanserai system, whither we can go.

To Miss Grace Norton.

11 Dover Street, Piccadilly,
Aug. 4, 1872.

. . . Dublin interested me much. . . . From Dublin to Chester, where we stayed five days, and where Charles Kingsley (who is a canon there) was very kind. We had the advantage of going over the Cathedral with him, and over the town with the chief local antiquary. We fell quite in love with it and with the delightful walk round the walls. We arrived in London night before last. Affectionately yours,

Llumbago Llowell.

To C. E. Norton.

11 Dover Street, Piccadilly,
13 August, 1872.

Give my love to Grace and relieve the anxiety of her mind by telling her I have found J. H. at the Tavistock Hotel, Covent Garden, where he is Mr. 'Omes. I have tried in vain to get him up hither. He goes to Dresden on Thursday to meet some friends whom he learned to know at the Fosters' and whom he likes. Then he is coming round slowly to Paris, where we are to meet and decide on plans. Meanwhile I have resolved to stay here till you come, if you come soon enough.[1] If not, I shall cross over to you. I go down to Yorkshire (I mean Cumberland) on Friday or Saturday to see the Storys. I can show Fanny York, Durham, and Fountain's Abbey on the way, — and Ripon, though I did not think it much twenty years ago. We shall spend a few days with the Storys at "Crosby Lodge on Eden" (which has a pleasant name, as if it stood in a garden of cucumbers), and then work downward through the Lake Country and so back to London. We have very central lodgings here, with what I value above all, a pleasant landlady. Our rooms are very small, but they can be smoked in, being bachelor apartments construed into the dual. As it is not the season, we shall probably have no trouble in getting them again when we come back. Now if you are coming

[1] Mr. Norton with his family was at St. Germain, near Paris.

over early in September, you see it would be better for us to stay till you come.

We have been having a very pleasant time thus far, though I have not yet quite got over the feeling of the ball and chain. It will take a good while. I do not know whether I told you I had resigned my professorship? I did so the night before we sailed that there might be no discussion. I found that at any rate my salary ceased during my absence, and so I thought it a good chance. I do not altogether like this matter of the salary. It prevents any professor who has not some private fortune of his own from having any vacation at all.[1] But I am glad it happened so, for it just turned the scale with me in favor of the wiser decision, — as I think it is. I cannot yet get over the dulness it ground into me. I begin to think I am too old ever to shake it wholly off. . . .

We have been seeing all sorts of things (persons are out of town) since we have been here. The Hogarths delight me again, and I have twice seen the Rake's Progress, which I did not get at when I was here before. Hogarth's color is as fine as his invention and dramatic powers. He astonishes me always by his soft brilliancy and harmony. I have *lots* of things to talk over when we meet.

[1] The difficulty has since been obviated by the system of sabbatical years at Harvard, with half salary.

To the Same.

11 Dover Street, Piccadilly,
15 September, 1872.

Here we are back again in our old lodgings, with the nicest of possible landladies, Mrs. Bennett. We spent ten days with the Storys at Crosby Lodge, and while there went to Naworth and Corbie Castles and Lanercost Abbey. Naworth interested me specially as being an old border keep tamed to modern civilities, and I liked the Howards, father and son, more even than their dwelling. On our way north we saw Peterboro, Lincoln, York, Fountain's Abbey, Ripon, Durham, and Carlisle. My old impression was confirmed, and Durham lords it over all of them in my memory. Again, also, as twenty years ago, the Cumberland people seemed more American in look and manner than other English folk. Our visit with the Storys was very pleasant — for a friendship of forty years' standing is no common thing — and William is absolutely unchanged. I found that I had grown away from him somewhat, but not in a way to lessen our cordiality, and as always in such cases, I held my tongue on controversial points.

From Cumberland we went right through to Grasmere, lodging at the old Swan Inn (the only one left), which pleased me more than it did Fanny. We drove to Dungeon Ghyll Force and Keswick, and then to Lichfield. Here I had a most amusing evening in the smoking-room, listening to the talk of the city magnates, full of *Philis-*

terei, if you will, but with a full Shakespearian flavor and a basis of English good sense that pleased me. From Lichfield through Worcester to Hereford and thence to Gloucester, whose cathedral I liked best on the whole, its centre tower being less squat than the others. But the northern minsters beat 'em.

Thence to Tintern, where we spent four days, doing Ragland meanwhile. From Tintern to Chepstow we took boat down the Wye, and very delightful it was. Thence to Bristol, where we slept, saw St. Mary Radcliffe and the cathedral, and then through to London. The sight of masts at Bristol was a cordial to me, and I thought them the finest trees I had seen in England.

I have not been over well since I have been in England. "Flying gout" I am fain to call it, and I am now drinking *Vichy* in the hope to make it fly altogether. But it is partly *dumps*, I fancy, for travelling bores me horribly. I am wretched at not finding a letter from Mabel here, and J. H. and Rowse have vanished, leaving no sign. I shall be all ready to come over so soon as I hear from you. You will find me dull, but honestly willing to brighten. A few days with you will do me infinite good. It is abroad that one truly misses friends. At home one is always expecting them back, and they do half come back in a thousand things that daily recall them. But here!

To the Same.

11 Dover Street, Piccadilly,
20 September, 1872.

. . . I will take the room at your hotel to begin on Monday, and shall without doubt be in Paris on Monday night at 8.15, according to the railway guide. I can only hope that trains are more punctual in France than here, where I have literally not found *one* up to time since I landed in Ireland, and often more than an hour behind it. . . .

My gout seems to have left off threatening, though it bullied me well for some weeks, but I have been out of sorts ever since I got here, *why* I can't divine. We have had letters from Mabel, in good health and happy, which have done me great good. . . .

To the Same.

Hotel de Lorraine, Rue de Beaune, No. 7,
16 October, 1872.

. . . We like our new quarters very much.[1] Moreover, our living (*vin et bois y compris*) costs us about fifty francs a week less than at the Hotel Windsor, and we get a better dinner here for three francs than there for six. Moreover, every-

[1] After three weeks spent with Mr. Norton and his family at their hotel in Paris, Mr. and Mrs. Lowell moved across the river, upon the departure of their friends to London. As will be seen later, this little hotel became their familiar home whenever they were in Paris. They endeared themselves to their host and hostess, and long after there hung, perhaps still hangs, in the office, a large photograph of Lowell.

thing here is French. Even the quarter of the town where we are has an indefinable Gallic flavor like the soupçon of garlic in their cookery. There are three or four regular habitués of the table (*dont trois decorés*) who seem to be scientific men; at any rate, one is a surgeon, and another who has lots of *esprit* an *avocat*, I suspect. On parle toujours et quelquefois tous ensemble, aussi qu'a force d'écouter consciencieusement je m'habitue sans le savoir à la langue. Un beau matin je me trouve parlant à merveille débitant les mots avec toute l'insouciance d'un aqueduc qui n'a pas aucune responsabilité des eaux qu'il verse. Si je veille pendant la nuit, je m'occupe à composer des petits discours qui auraient mis le peu Massillon hors de lui d'envie.

Je ne suis pas encore allé chez M. Littré, mais je te remercie beaucoup pour la lettre et la presenterai en très peu de jours. J'ai acheté une de les plumes d'or que tu m'as louées mais soit la pauvreté du papier (à très bon marché) ou bien des idées, elle refuse de marcher dans une langue aussi facile que doit lui etre la française.

Since your departure, my dear boy, I have bucaneered ('t is a free translation of bouquiné, corresponding to my exploits in turning my native tongue into French — for I like to be consistent) among the stalls, but Fortune packed her trunk (the baggage!) at the same time with you, and I have not prospered much. One attribute of deity I have not arrogated presumptuously but enjoy by a privilege of nature, to wit (*à savoir*), that of con-

founding the counsels of the wicked, for I puzzle the dealers awfully now and then with my *discours.* I suppose it must be that I inadvertently mix in too much of l'ancien Français. 'T is as if one should talk pure Chaucer to Burnham.[1] However, I bought the seventeen volume Byron for $40, and have sent it to my grandson's (I mean Petit fils — you see how I am getting translated) to be bound. If it were not for this confounded pen (saving your reverence) I would write you a cheerful letter — but what can one do when it takes so long to write the first half of a sentence that one forgets the last? I assure you I had several clever things to say, but they are stuck in my pen — a very unfortunate position of things, because you will see they have gone out of my head. . . .

To the Same.

PARIS, 1 November, 1872.

. . . Now for *bouquiniste* news. I think I did not tell you that I had picked up a splendid quarto (with fine port) of Montaigne's Travels. It is a beauty. Also *Nouveaux Memoires pour servir à l'histoire du Cartesianisme*, a tiny tome in vellum with Ste. Beuve's autograph and pencil marks. Best of all, I got at an auction *Le Chevalier au Cigne*, which I have long vainly sought, four volumes quarto *demi mar.* for $33.50. I should not have thought it dear at a hundred. I am going out presently after a copy of the *Poètes Champenois*, which I have found at Aubry's, for

[1] A well known second-hand bookseller in Boston.

$180. Pillet asked $350 for an incomplete set. After this last extravagance I shall retire from business for a while, for I am getting beyond my depth. Aubry has a copy of *Renard* bound for $40. Shall I buy it for you? It includes Chabaillé's supplementary fifth volume. . . .

We are having a nice time, though I felt like Dante when he turned round and missed Virgil, when I found that Rowse had flown. However, three days after John [Holmes] arrived in excellent health and spirits — likes our hotel, and will stay *ad libitum*. His knee is not quite right, but otherwise he is robustious. He confided to me yesterday that the first time we walked out, he wished me to guide him to where he could get some oysters! He thought they would quite set him up. He is very droll with his German, and delightful to the last degree. In French he is as inarticulate as one of his favorite shell-fish. We have a little woman who comes to talk with us an hour a day, and so soon as I get *fluid* I am going to Littré. I already enter into conversation at table with gusto.

To the Same.

PARIS, 14 November, 1872.

. . . I am very glad you sent the Emersons to me. I have engaged him a lovely little apartment *au premier* at 8 frs. the day. I think I shall take it myself when they go, for I am more and more minded to stay the winter through. We are all well and send lots of love to all of you. Fanny is

at work on French exercises all day, and as for me, when I get my French suit of clothes I shall be a thorough Gaul. I am ready for a revolution (or at any rate an *e mute*) to-morrow. It is pretty chilly here now, and I almost wish the Commune had put off their bonfires till the middle of November, when they would have done some good. I am writing on a marble table, and my fingers are numb as gutta percha.

To the Same.

PARIS, 6 December, 1872.

There has been an untoward gap in my correspondence, because I have fallen back a little into home habits, and have been pegging away at Old French again. . . . But the days are so short! and it has been such gloomy weather. Fifty-seven days of rain, think of it, and the only excitement the *crue* of the Seine. Yes, we are beginning to have another, for we are threatened with a revolution. The Right are resolved to push things to extremes, and would rather have a military triumvirate than Thiers with a ministry of his own choosing. The French look upon Paris as the metropolis of the world, but I am more and more struck with a certain provincialism of mind shown in the importance they attach to their own personality. Every one of them has the flavor of a village great man. It is not individuality I mean, but value of self. No man can bring himself to get out of the way, even though it is the country he is blocking. I pick up a good deal at my *table d'hôte* and am more and more pleased with it.

I have not yet been to call on Littré, but I shall before long. My French still refuses to go trippingly from my tongue. However, I manage now to converse at table, and plunge into general discussion bravely. In the intervals of the rain (for it does not always rain all day long, though it rains every day) I take long walks in every direction, and am grown pretty intimate with Paris. I still like it and the people. By the way, Clarice (the maid who waits at breakfast) said to me this morning: "Les aristocrats ne veulent pas que la basse classe soit instruite. Ils croient que le peuple sait trop déja. Avec la République nous aurions l'instruction obligatoire. Ah, ce serait une chose très bonne pour nous." I am inclined to believe that the people know more than my friend, the Marquis de Grammont, thinks!

To the Same.

PARIS, 11 January, 1873.

. . . My life runs on in the same canal. A walk before breakfast round the parallelogram formed by the Pont de Solferino at one end and the Pont des Arts at the other, then a walk after breakfast with John up to the Pont Neuf and across to the courtyard of the Tuileries where we sit and collogue over our cigars, feeding the sparrows between whiles; then home, and John to Schiller's Thirty Years' War and I to my Old French. In the dusk I generally take a longer walk by myself, or else the same one with John. I have got a whole closet full of books, and have reached the end of my

tether, having just received an account from the Barings showing that I have overdrawn £104. However, the books are a kind of investment. But I begin to foresee that I shall not stay abroad so long as I expected. I thought I was all right now, but as usual my income is never so large as my auguries. Fortunately, I like Cambridge better than any other spot of the earth's surface, and if I can only manage to live there shall be at ease yet. . . .

To the Same.

PARIS, 18 March, 1873.

. . . I shall probably be in England before you go, for Hughes writes me (this is between ourselves) that there is a chance of their giving me a D. C. L. at Oxford, which I should like. I am not, I think, overfond of decorations, but I should like this one, for I cannot get over a superstitious respect for what goes into the college triennial catalogue.

To Thomas Hughes.

PARIS, 19 March, 1873.

. . . What you say of the quiet lives that would come to the front in England in a time of stress, I believe to be true of us also. I cannot think such a character as Emerson's — one of the simplest and noblest I have ever known — a freak of chance, and I hope that my feeling that the country is growing worse is nothing more than men of my age have always felt when they looked back to the *tempus actum*. . . . If I had dreamed you

would have run over to Paris, would n't I have told you where I was! But, in fact, I have lingered on here from week to week aimlessly, having come abroad to do nothing, and having thus far succeeded admirably.

To Leslie Stephen.

PARIS, 29 April, 1873.

. . . I think I have made up my mind to run over to London for a day or two, to bid the Nortons good-by, for I cannot bear to have the sea between us before I see them again. If I do, I shall arrive about the 7th of May, and I shall count on seeing you as much as possible. . . . I have read your "Are we Christians?" and liked it, of course, because I found *you* in it, and that is something that will be dear to me so long as I keep my wits. I think I should say that you lump *shams* and *conventions* too solidly together in a common condemnation. All conventions are not shams by a good deal, and we should soon be Papuans without them. But I dare say I have misunderstood you.

To the Same.

PARIS, 3 May, 1873.

I shall arrive Monday night, and have taken a chamber at the Queen's Hotel, which is described to me as "somewhere behind the Burlington Arcade," which is tolerably central. I shall not think of billeting myself on you, especially as you are not yet fairly settled. But I wish to see as much of

you as may be. I must see your new nest as I did the old one, for that was a great satisfaction to me, and I recall it often in fancy. I must make the acquaintance of Miss Laura, too, in whom I feel an added interest now that I have got my step, and am a grandfather.[1] You would laugh at the number of perambulators (as they call baby-wagons nowadays) and ponies that I have bought for that wonderful boy, as I lie awake at night and hear the tramp of the *sergent de ville* under my windows. I have carried him through college so many times, that he must be a prodigy of learning by this time. I do not know whether I ought to betray it even to you, but he has more than once shown a tendency to be *fast*, though I have reclaimed him. I am quite sure he is steady now, and does not drink more than is good for him. That story of the police court was much exaggerated.

I don't wonder that you feel sad at the thought of losing the Nortons. They have been and are more to me than I can tell. But you will see them all again, when you come to make your visit to me, which I look upon as pledged. It is as easy to get to us as to Switzerland, and you shall sleep now and then in the ice-chest to make you comfortable. The roof of the barn is pretty slippery and the ground below hard enough to give you a smart Alpine shock. By the way, what you say about Switzerland in July delights me. Remember that my address is always to the care of the Barings,

[1] Mrs. Burnett's first child had lately been born.

and let me know where you are to be and when. I have a sort of glimmering of Lausanne, where I could exist cheaply, for though on pleasure I am bent, I am forced to have a frugal mind. But I am more and more convinced that a man (especially a grandfather) is most comfortable when he has worn his ruts deepest, and I should fly over the deep to-morrow if I could. It is ignoble, but it is true. I always hated the sights *qu'il faut voir*, and now there is no hope of strangeness anywhere. Man is a most uninventive animal — you scratch through the nationality and there *he* is underneath — the very bore you were running away from. However, I am rested and grown so stout that I have positively had to let out a reef in my trousers.

I reckon on a very jolly time in London, because I shall always be in the tremor of going away — though I am almost sorry that I am going when I think of saying good-by to the Nortons. I am sorry you did not see more of Emerson; he is good to love, and if his head be sometimes in thin and difficult air, his heart never is. He must have left London, then? Gay told me he met you at the Nortons, and kept calling you Stevens, and I irascibly correcting him as I would a vicious proof-sheet. I don't know why, but I am always exasperated when anybody pluralizes you. Whether it is that I hold you to be unique, or that I was once cheated by a man named Stevens, I can't tell. However, Gay is a good fellow and a good artist for all that. Why is it that people do so? They always call Child *Childs* in the same fashion.

My eyes gave out some time ago, so I will only say that I shall go straight to Cleveland Place Tuesday morning, and if you dropt in on your way down town, it would be the best possible world so long as it lasted.

To C. E. Norton.

(Passenger by "Olympus.")

PARIS, 13 May, 1873.

I am so wont to carry Home about with me and to say "here," when I mean Cambridge, even in Paris, that I did not fairly realize to myself that you were all going away till I was meditating over my pipe on board the Channel steamer. I made up my mind that I would fling an old shoe after you in the shape of a good-by that should surprise you after you were fairly embarked. I need not say how happy my three days with you in London were, nor how sweet it was to renew the old, old friendship with you all. We don't make new friends, at least not in the same sense, for it is the privilege of old friendship that it knows all our weaknesses and accounts for them beforehand, taking almost a kind of pleasure in them as we do in bad weather that we have prophesied.

I wish I could have gone with you to Oxford, but Fanny was so happy at seeing me a day sooner than she expected that I was glad I did n't. However, I made a memorandum never to leave her behind again in future. . . . They had taken good care of her while I was away, for somehow or other everybody in the house is fond of her.

The best wish I can make for you is that every day of your passage may be as fine as this which is a mixture of all that is sweetest in spring time. May the dry masts of your steamer be covered with leaves and flowers like Joseph's rod, and may the porpoises gamble about you for the children's sake. . . .

> No iceberg come anigh thee,
> No curdling east wind try thee,
> The wreaths of the wake
> Whirl in moons for thy sake,
> And the fogs furl off and fly thee!

My heart is fuller than I dreamed of with this parting, but it is not foreboding I am sure. I shall find you all again after many days, and we shall have many happy hours together. . . .

To T. B. Aldrich.

PARIS, 28 May, 1873.

. . . I shall stay out my two years, though personally I would rather be at home. In certain ways this side is more agreeable to my tastes than the other, — but even the buttercups stare at me as a stranger and the birds have a foreign accent. . . .

Before this reaches you I shall have been over to Oxford to get a D. C. L. So by the time you get it this will be the letter of a Doctor and entitled to the more respect. Perhaps, in order to get the full flavor, you had better read this passage first, if you happen to think of it. Do you not detect a certain flavor of parchment and Civil Law? . . .

To Thomas Hughes.

PARIS, 2 June, 1873.

. . . We shall leave Paris to-morrow or next day, stopping in Rheims to see the churches, at Louvain for the Town House, and so on to Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges. . . . If I don't see you in Oxford, I shall stop long enough in London to get a glimpse of you. Our plan is to go to Switzerland and Germany, and so down to Italy for the winter. Then back to Paris, and so over to England on our way home next year. I hate travelling with my whole soul, though I like well enough to "be" in places. . . .

To Mrs. Lewis A. Stimson.

BRUGES, 25 June, 1873.

. . . I have been over to Oxford to be doctored, and had a very pleasant time of it. You would respect me if you could have seen me in my scarlet gown. . . . We go from here in a day or two to Holland — then up the Rhine to Switzerland, where we join the Stephens and Miss Thackeray.

To C. E. Norton.

VENICE, 30 October, 1873.

. . . Since we left Bruges, we have been up the Rhine, and then across to Nürnberg, where we spent a fortnight in great contentment. Before this, however, we had made a pretty good giro in the Low Countries, going wherever there was a good cathedral or Town Hall. . . . When we

reached Geneva we found ourselves so comfortable that we stayed two months and did some reading. I liked the town, and especially the walks in its neighborhood, very much. Then we went to Chamonix, and then over the Simplon to the Italian lakes, whence we came hither. Venice charms me more than ever. We keep a gondola and go about leisurely seeing all the lovely things. . . . The weather has not been very good, but there has been only one day when we could not go out in the gondola without the *coperto*, either toward the Lido or over the lagunes to watch the sunset, or through the smaller canals to find that the very back lanes of Venice are finer than the highstreets anywhere else. . . .

I am recovering a little facility in Italian — to be lost again when I get beyond the daily sound of it. I give Fanny a lesson every day in the Promessi Sposi, which has so often served as a go-cart to those who are learning to take their first steps in the language. She reads aloud to me, so that I save my eyes and practise my ears at the same time. She is a very good scholar for she puts zeal into whatever she does, and is making great progress. It is odd to me how the familiar phrases cling round my brain like bats to the roof of a cage, and are set flying all of a sudden by a chance footfall. I am very much struck, by the way, to find how much more vividly I remember the Venetian pictures than any others. I can't help thinking it implies a peculiar merit in them. I recall them as I do natural objects — the Staubbach for example, or Hogarth. . . .

To Thomas Hughes.

VENICE, Thanksgiving Day, 1873.

. . . I can't "do" anything over here except study a little now and then, and I long to get back to my reeky old den at Elmwood. Then I hope to find I have learned something in my two years abroad. . . . I am looking forward to home now, and should n't wonder if I took up my work at Harvard again, as they wish me to do. We leave Venice probably to-morrow for Verona. Thence to Florence, Rome, and Naples. . . .

As the year 1874 opened, the question of Lowell's return to college work was mooted. He had felt a little piqued at being suffered to leave, after sixteen years' continuous service, without any concession from the college. He thought at least he might have been granted leave of absence on half pay, and when no proposal of this sort was made, he sent in a definite resignation. Now the authorities intimated that they hoped he would resume his old place. He was in doubt what he should do. He had tasted the pleasures of freedom; he remembered well the uncongeniality of much of his work; he was painfully conscious of lacking qualities requisite for success in the profession of teaching; he had, moreover, been disturbed by physical disabilities, especially in a blurring of memory and a weakness in his head which alarmed him; the trouble, he decided, was "flying gout," a disorder to which he had been more or less subject for

many years, and which never left him for long after this period. More disturbing still was the "drop of black blood" he had inherited from his mother, which was apt to spread itself over the pupil of his eye, darkening everything, and, as he said, temporarily inducing a mood of suspicion or distrust.

On the other hand, he was at a time of life when uncertainties of income were likely to create anxiety rather than to stimulate exertion. His income from the sale of his land had proved less than he anticipated, and he felt the need of a fixed increase. Moreover, he found that college life had become more of a habit than he suspected; the putting of the sea between him and it did not emancipate him, though it gave a temporary exhilaration. He was timid about experiments in living. Yet he was unwilling to allow himself to be governed in such a matter wholly by financial considerations. As he wrote to a friend: "If the worst came, I could sell my house and go into lodgings, which perhaps would n't be so unwise after all. At any rate, I can't let that be a prevailing motive to decide me about so sacred an office as that of Teacher."

"I never was good for much as a professor," he wrote to Mr. Norton, 2 February, 1874; "once a week, perhaps, at the best, when I could manage to get into some conceit of myself, and so could put a little of my *go* into the boys. The rest of the time my desk was as good as I. And then, on the other hand, my being a professor was n't good for me —

it damped my gunpowder, as it were, and my mind, when it took fire at all (which was n't often), drawled off in an unwilling fuse instead of leaping to meet the first spark." There was, besides all this, a possible complication with a friend in whose light he would not stand, and letting this tip the scales, he wrote refusing the reappointment. There came in reply a letter from the president of the college, removing the supposed complication and setting the whole matter in such a light that Lowell revoked his decision and accepted the appointment. It was characteristic of him, that though asked to send his final answer before a certain date, he dismissed the subject from his mind, and wrote from Paris three months later: "I don't know whether I am a professor or no. On the second of May it suddenly flashed across me that I was to say *yes* or *no* before the first of that whimsical month, and that I had forgotten all about it. I meant to say *yes* on the whole, but if luck has settled it *no*, perhaps it 's for the best."

A more consuming interest had driven professorships out of his head. He was in Florence at the time of this correspondence, and in Florence, too, when he heard of the death of Agassiz, and on the eve of leaving for Rome he was moved to write that elegy which, if it does not reach the height of his odes in poetical spirit, has that endearing quality which will continue to make it read as long as people continue to take delight in the verses in which poets celebrate their friendships. But Goldsmith's "Retaliation," Longfellow's Introduc-

tion to the "Tales of a Wayside Inn," Emerson's "Adirondacs," and Holmes's occasional poems are in lighter vein than "Agassiz," which stands midway in poetry between such poems and Milton's "Lycidas." As in the case of the others, it has a succession of portraits, but it strikes a deeper note; the elegiac quality is present, and the complaint, the linking of personal grief with universal emotion, the widening of sympathy, all serve to leave in the mind rather the mood of restless enquiry into deep problems of life, than of sensitive appreciation of a series of portraits. It is perhaps worth noting that he had just been reading Leslie Stephen's "Essays on Free Thinking and Plain Speaking," and had been stirred by the book into more or less of an enquiry of his own attitude toward the great questions of life and immortality. Referring to the book, he wrote to Mr. Norton: "I emancipated myself long ago, and any friendly attempt to knock off my shackles is apt to result in barking my shins, don't you see? Science has scuttled the old Ship of Faith, and now they would fain persuade me that there is something dishonest as well as undignified in drifting about on the hencoop that I had contrived to secure in the confusion. They undertake to demonstrate to me that it 's a hencoop and an unworthy perch for a philosopher. But I shall cling fast. 'T is as good as a line-of-battle ship if it only keep my head above water. I am so made that I allow no distinction between natural and supernatural. There is none for me. I am as supernatural a ghost as was ever met with.

But I like Leslie's book all the same. It is very able, honest, and clever — full of wit and trained muscle." And to Mr. Stephen himself he wrote later: "My only objection to any part of your book is, that I think our beliefs more a matter of choice (natural selection, perhaps, but anyhow not logical) than you would admit, and that I find no fault with a judicious shutting of the eyes." [1]

When one compares the portraits in "Agassiz" with the earlier sketches, sometimes of the same persons, in "A Fable for Critics," one finds it easy to mark the mellower, richer tints in the later work. The poem was indeed almost a real posthumous work. Lowell, removed by an ocean's width from his old comrades and his familiar haunts, mingled the dead and the living in his imagination and found in the whole concourse, headed by Agassiz himself, a microcosm of that world in which he took the greatest delight, the world of friendly, wise, and witty men. As in the case of the Commemoration Ode, it drew virtue from him, for he had put into it a large part of himself, and had been possessed by it. Shortly after finishing it, he wrote of his experience in the composition to Mr. Norton,[2] and later, when there had been time for the sensation to cool, for an interchange of comment and criticism, and for the poem itself to meet his eyes in its printed form, he wrote again: —

"To tell the truth, my collapse from the happy excitement of composition was so great, that when

[1] *Letters*, ii. 125.

[2] See *Letters*, ii. 115.

the poem came to me in print, it inspired me with something like that disgust a freshman feels at sight of an empty bottle the next morning after his first debauch. I have not been able to read it through yet, but have only turned to such passages as you thought needed retouching. In doing this a few others caught my eye. My dear boy, don't you see (to answer what I forgot before and what you remind me of again) that Emerson and Longfellow are both, thank God, still in the flesh, and that I should not have mentioned them at all, but that I *saw* them so vividly I could n't help it. This, too, is my reply to what you say of a resemblance to a passage in Rogers (I thought it was Beckford). I think I see what you mean, but I regard it not, for the *thought* is altogether unlike, and came to me (as the receivers of stolen goods say) in the way of my business. I had gone out of myself utterly. I was in the dining-room at Parker's, and when I came back to self-consciousness and solitude, it was in another world that I awoke, and I was puzzled to say which. It was a case of possession but not of self-possession. I was cold, but my brain was full of warm light, and the passage came to me in its completeness without any seeming intervention of mine. I was delighted, I confess, with this renewal of imagination in me after so many blank years. If there be any verbal coincidence with Rogers, I shall be surprised and sorry. It had never occurred to me, and I think if anywhere it must be in the couplet beginning: 'In this abstraction.' But I hope you

will turn out to be mistaken. I am glad the poem is liked, though I cannot yet see it fairly. I thought it should be good by the state in which it left me and by the unconscious way in which it came. The only part I *composed* was the concluding verses, which I suspect to be the weakest part. The verse that cost me most trouble was the first, which, do what I would, insisted on being as Johnsonian as 'Observation, with extensive view.' But it is hard to put a wire into a verse without stiffening the latter.

"I surrendered the last verse about Longfellow without a murmur. I spoiled it by thinking more of the vehicle than what it was to carry. But Emerson's nose must stand.[1] I will give you 'shrewd' instead of 'wise,' however, for it is better and (I think) the word that came first. I have not left my opinion of either of these two doubtful, for I have celebrated one in prose, and the other in verse, which is more than either of 'em has done for me, go to!

"I thank you heartily, my dear Charles, for all your criticisms. I like to hear them, and when I don't agree it is not from self-love, of which (in such matters) I have as little as most men. But I have a respect for things that are *given me*, as the greater part of this was, and my poetry ought to show marks of design if it does n't. If I have done anything good, I owe it more largely to your sympathy, which spurred me out of my constitutional indolence and indifference, than to anything else.

[1] "While the wise nose's firm-built aquiline."

I like to tell you so, for it is true. I value my own natural gifts (as I think I have a right) but set no great store by my performance. I came into the world with a strong dose of poppy in my veins, and love dreaming better than doing. This has been a great hindrance to me, and I have struggled hard against it, but never against my consciousness of it." . .

From Florence the Lowells went, 23 February, 1874, to Rome, and were with the Storys at the Palazzo Barberini.

To C. E. Norton.

Rome, 26 February, 1874.

. . . The journey from Florence was one long surprise in the snowy mountains. There is much more than common, and I had never seen them so before. But the almond-trees are in blossom. Rome saddens me, I can't quite say how. My associations with it are of so peculiar and deep a kind, and so astonishingly undeadened by time. Generally I find I have forgotten much, but here all my memories seem of yesterday. . . .

I have not much time to myself here in the Palazzo Barberini, as you will easily fancy. I am thoroughly glad to find my old friend's statues so much to my liking. The Libyan Sybil, the Salome and the Electra I especially like. But he is now at work on an Alcestis which will be a long way ahead of anything he has done. It is beautifully simple, graceful, and dignified.

To the Same.

Rome, 2 March, 1874.

. . . The sun is just about to set, and I see the moon rising white over the stone pines that sentinel the gate of the Barberini Gardens. We have been at Sant' Onofrio and seen the incomparable view thence. We started for the Vatican, but were too late, and so walked on to Sant' Onofrio. The mountains are white as Switzerland — the farther ones I mean. I hardly knew the road from Florence hither for this strangeness of snow. But the almond-trees are in blossom, and the daisies and violets and other little field flowers unknown to me.

To Miss Norton.

Albergo Crocolle, Napoli,
Marzo 12, 1874.

. . . We left Rome after a fortnight's visit to the Storys, which was very pleasant *quoad* the old friends, but rather wild and whirling *quoad* the new. Two receptions a week, one in the afternoon and one in the evening, were rather confusing for wits so eremitical as mine. I am not equal to the *grande monde*. . . .

We have been twice to the incomparable Museum, which is to me the most interesting in the world. There is the keyhole through which we barbarians can peep into a Greek interior — provincial Greek, Roman Greek if you will, but still Greek.

To C. E. Norton.

HOTEL DE LORRAINE,
7 RUE DE BEAUNE, PARIS, 11 May, 1874.

. . . I expected to arrive here a fortnight earlier than I did, for the fine weather began just as we were leaving Rome, and I dawdled as one always does in that lovely air. I had one delightful drive out to the Tavolato with Story, Dexter, Wild, and Tilton the day before we left. We lunched under an arbor of dried canes, drank *vino asciulto*, ate a *frittata* and endless eggs *al tegame*, and were like boys on a half-holiday. What a light that was half shadow, and what shadows that were all light were over everything! . . .

They explain all our bad weather here, and it is nearly all bad, by the simple formula *ce sont les giboulées*, and you see I have been lucky enough to get from a doctor in Rome a phrase that makes me more content under the unseasonable performances of my own personal meteorology. I have already accumulated a heap of catalogues, but have bought no books. I shall buy a few more. . . .

To W. D. Howells.

PARIS, 13 May, 1874.

. . . We have taken our passage for the 24th June, and shall arrive, if all go well, in time for the "glorious Fourth." I hope we shall find you in Cambridge. I long to get back, and yet am just beginning to get wonted (as they say of babies and new cows) over here. The delightful little

inn where I am lodged is almost like home to me, and the people are as nice as can be. . . .

To George Putnam.

PARIS, 19 May, 1874.

. . . For my own part, though I have had a great deal of homesickness, I come back to Cambridge rather sadly. I have not been over well of late. The doctor in Rome, however, gave my troubles a name — and that by robbing them of mystery has made them commonplace. He said it was *suppressed gout.* It has a fancy of gripping me in the stomach sometimes, holding on like a slow fire for seven hours at a time. It is wonderful how one gets used to things, however. But it seems to be growing lighter, and I hope to come home robust and red. . . .

To Thomas Hughes.

PARIS, 27 May, 1874.

To see your handwriting again was almost like taking you by the hand. I seem next door to you here, the distance is so short compared with the long ferry between me and Mabel.

I had no thought of reproaching you with not answering my note from Venice. I only wished you to know that I had written, for I should not have done it if Field had not told me you wished to know where I was. I never write if I can help it, and therefore am ready not only to forgive, but even to sympathize with those who have the same failing.

If I could get in at Mrs. Bennett's again I should like it particularly, for I was perfectly satisfied there. She was not a bit the lodging-house landlady of tradition, but a really refined woman, and her household matched her. But I fear that paradise is closed against us, for when I was last in London somebody else had discovered her, and hired the whole house. If you would be good enough to ask and let me know I should be greatly obliged. . . . I should want the lodgings for a fortnight. The steamer's day is put back to the 23d. On the whole I shall go back as young as I came except my eyes, which fail me more and more. . . .

To the Same.

BRUNSWICK HOTEL, LONDON,
Thursday.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND, — I was hoping to see your manly and tender face once more before I go, but perhaps it is better as it is, for I hate farewells — they always seem to ignore another world by the stress they lay on the chances of never meeting again in this. We shall meet somewhere, for we love one another. Your friendship has added a great sweetness to my life, whether I look backward or forward. . . .

I had a delightful visit to Cambridge. Everybody was as warm as the day was cold. When I go home I shall try to be half as good as the public orator said I was. . . . Good-by and God bless you. With most hearty love,

Yours always, J. R. LOWELL.

The reference in the last sentence is to the generous language in which the degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon him by the University of Cambridge. He regarded the decoration as in a measure a friendly recognition of the University's daughter in the American Cambridge, but he could not help being pleased by it. "You don't know," he wrote to a friend, of the public orator's Latin speech, "what an odd kind of *posthumous* feeling it gives one."

The Lowells sailed from Liverpool 23 June, 1874, and after a foggy and rainy passage were ten miles from Boston Light Friday evening, 3 July. There the fog caught them again and forced them to lie off till the morning, so that they reached Cambridge at half after nine o'clock on the Fourth of July.

CHAPTER XIII

POLITICS

1874–1877

The Lowells returned at once to Elmwood, which the Aldrich family had relinquished on the first of July, and were welcomed by Mrs. Burnett and the first grandson, who had come down from Southborough to greet them. "He is as strong and good-natured as a young mastiff," Lowell wrote a week after his return, to Mr. Hughes. "I am already stupidly in love with him and miss all day long the tramp tramp of his sturdy feet along the entry."

"Thus far," he writes to Mr. Godkin, 16 July, 1874, "I have nothing to complain of at home but the heat, which takes hold like a bulldog after that toothless summer of England, where they have on the whole the best climate this side of Dante's terrestrial paradise. The air there always seems native to my lungs. As for my grandson, he is a noble fellow and does me great credit. Such is human nature that I find myself skipping the intermediate generation (which certainly in some obscure way contributed to his begetting, as I am ready to admit when modestly argued) and looking upon him as the authentic result of my own

loins. I am going to Southborough to-day on a visit to him, for I miss him woundily. If you wish to taste the real *bouquet* of life, I advise you to procure yourself a grandson, whether by adoption or theft. The cases of child-stealing one reads of in the newspapers now and then may all, I am satisfied, be traced to this natural and healthy instinct. A grandson is one of the necessities of middle life, and may be innocently purloined (or taken by right of eminent domain) on the *tabula in naufragio* principle. Get one, and the *Nation* will no longer offend anybody. You will feel at peace with all the world."

The summer was spent happily in the old familiar home. Lowell had no impulse to stir. He never could find any reason for escaping to the resorts in the White Mountains. "Why the deuce people fly to the mountains before the Last Day," he wrote to Mr. Aldrich, "I can't conceive, but when you get over your insanity and come back to the breezy plains again (thermometer 70° at half-past eight this morning), I shall hope to see you. My catbird saved one sonata for the first day of my home-coming and has been dumb ever since."

Lowell fell to work at once in his study, giving laborious days to Old French and Old English and feeling a confidence which he expressed naïvely by saying that he used a pen instead of a pencil in his notes in his books. When the college term opened in the fall, he renewed his connection, walking up and down to his class-room and resuming his teaching of Dante and Old French. After his death the

more valuable part of his library came into the possession of the college either by his bequest[1] or by purchase, and the student having recourse to these books is constantly reminded of the care with which Lowell read them, pencil or pen in hand, going over the text as if it were proof-sheets requiring revision, and jotting down now textual criticism, now ingenious comparison with words and phrases in other languages. Sometimes he had two texts by him, and revised one by the other, sometimes his better knowledge or his mother wit enabled him to supply emendations to some careless editor's work. The annotations show his keen philological interest. A word, whether in Old French, English, or Yankee was at once a lively image and an article in a museum. He never tired of pursuing the ancestry or the kin or the progeny of these winged creatures, and the very wealth of his puns testified to the quick association which his mind kept up with all the material of language.[2]

So far as the interpretation of mediæval litera-

[1] One clause of his will reads: "I give to the corporation of Harvard College, the Library thereof, my copy of Webster on Witchcraft, formerly belonging to Increase Mather, President of the College; and also any books from my library of which the College Library does not already possess copies, or of which the copies or editions in my library are for any reason whatever preferable to those possessed by the College Library." He had at the time of his death about seven thousand books in his library.

[2] He was wont to assemble on the fly-leaf of a volume notable words that had struck him when reading the text, and it is worth noting that the careful index to the Riverside edition of Lowell's writings contains under the heading "Words and Phrases" some seven score examples.

ture went, Lowell's intuitive perception and quick poetic sympathy enabled him to touch into life what to many scholars was a mere cadaver to be dissected; but in the historical treatment, and more especially in the comparative method, he was at the disadvantage of entering upon the study before the great work had been done in this field. It was probably on this account that though he covered a good deal of ground in his lectures to his classes, he did not avail himself of this work for publication.

Besides his academic work, Lowell took up also some writing, contributing verses during the next few months to the *Atlantic* and the *Nation* and making the last of his studies in great literature in an article on Spenser. A large part of the pleasure of these papers for him was the opportunity it gave him for a fresh reading of his author. "I have been very busy with Spenser," he writes to Mrs. T. S. Perry, 28 February, 1875, "about whom I hope to have something in the next N. A. R. I have been reading him *through* again. It is as good as lying on one's back in the summer woods." To another friend he had written just before: "I have had a bath of Spenser. Your Turkish are nothing to him." It is an illustration of the thoroughness with which he revised his work that this article on Spenser started as a lecture, but when he came to turn the lecture into a paper, he retained only a passage or two of the original form.

He confessed in a letter written in the summer of 1875 that he had become a quicker writer in

verse and slower in prose than when he was younger. The confession may well have grown out of his experience in writing the two centennial odes for which he was called on this year, that "For the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Fight at Concord Bridge," and that "Read at Cambridge on the Hundredth Anniversary of Washington's Taking Command of the American Army, 3rd July, 1775." Both were very nearly improvisations, the former being written in the two days before the celebration, and the latter at short notice after Dr. Holmes could not be had. The lyrical character of the Concord ode makes it sing a little more quickly to the ear of youth, and I think that while there are in it slight allusions to the dead Hawthorne and Thoreau, there is also a faint echo of the living Emerson. It would be strange indeed if Lowell, called thus to celebrate the fight which had already been celebrated in the noblest patriotic hymn in our literature, had not had the vision of Emerson before him as he wrote. What Emerson, who must have been present, said of the ode we do not know, but in a letter written after "Under the Old Elm" had been delivered and printed, Lowell quotes his comment on the second Ode. "I went," he says, "to club on Saturday and nominated ——, whom Emerson seconded. Longfellow was there and James and Quincy and Dr. Howe and Carter and Charlie L. and I. We had a very jolly club and good talk. Emerson was tenderly affectionate. He praised my Cambridge poem, saying that when he began

it he said: 'Why, he has n't got his genius on, but presently I found the tears in my eyes.'"

Into the second Ode Lowell put more thought and rose to the height of his great theme, for he was able to look at his country from the vantage-ground of the personality of Washington, and he read in the great past an augury of the future which for the moment at least did not vex his anxious mind. "I took advantage of the occasion," he wrote to a correspondent who was Southern born, "to hold out a hand of kindly reconciliation to Virginia. I could do it with the profounder feeling, that no family lost more than mine by the civil war. Three nephews (the hope of our race) were killed in one or other of the Virginia battles, and three cousins on other of those bloody fields."

In these two odes as well as in the one given on the great centennial day, the Fourth of July, 1876, Lowell spoke with no uncertain sound regarding those eternal truths of freedom and country which made patriotism with him a solemn passion. But so much the more impossible was it for him to close his eyes to the signs of defection from high ideals, or his lips when the impulse of speech came to him. In his poem on Agassiz written while still in Europe and obliged, as he has elsewhere said, always to be on the defensive, he gave expression to his deep scorn in a few lines which have not lost their sting, though a quarter of a century has passed since they were written. No one whose memory carries him back to the days of Grant's second administration can forget the breathless

fear of what next might be disclosed, and an American like Lowell, compelled to read the elegant extracts of peculation and fraud in high places which the English press in those days culled as examples of American public life, was even more keenly impressed than if he were in the midst of it all and could yet brace himself with the knowledge of better things mingled with these.[1] But the second stanza of the Agassiz was mild compared with the condensed bitterness of "The World's Fair, 1876," which he printed in the *Nation*, or the sarcastic arraignment in "Tempora Mutantur," printed in the same journal. The longer poem, with its etchings of Tweed and Fisk, bitten in with an acid that is keener than any used in the "Biglow Papers," is preserved in "Heartsease and Rue," a record of shame that is wholesomely unpleasant to recall whenever one is disposed to be complacent. The other was set up for the same volume, but afterward withdrawn. It could well be spared from Lowell's works, but has a stronger claim in a record of his life and character.

[1] The verse in "Agassiz" which cut deepest was that containing the lines

> "And all the unwholesomeness
> The Land of Broken Promise serves of late
> To teach the Old World how to wait."

When he reprinted in the poem in *Heartsease and Rue*, Lowell made some verbal changes, and in this passage substituted "the Land of Honest Abraham" for "the Land of Broken Promise." One may ponder over the change and settle it with himself which stings more, irony or sarcasm.

THE WORLD'S FAIR, 1876.

Columbia, puzzled what she should display
Of true home-make on her Centennial Day,
Asked Brother Jonathan: he scratched his head,
Whittled a while reflectively, and said,
"Your own invention and own making, too?
Why, any child could tell ye what to do:
Show 'em your Civil Service, and explain
How all men's loss is everybody's gain;
Show your new patent to increase your rents
By paying quarters for collecting cents;
Show your short cut to cure financial ills
By making paper collars current bills;
Show your new bleaching-process, cheap and brief,
To wit, a jury chosen by the thief;
Show your State Legislatures; show your Rings;
And challenge Europe to produce such things
As high officials sitting half in sight
To share the plunder and to fix things right.
If that don't fetch her, why, you only need
To show your latest style in martyrs, — Tweed:
She 'll find it hard to hide her spiteful tears
At such advance in one poor hundred years."

These verses, as may readily be guessed, brought out wrathful rejoinders, and Lowell was accused of having made a cheap exchange of his democratic principles for aristocratic snobberies when absent from his country. The situation called out a vigorous defence of Lowell in an article by Mr. Joel Benton, entitled "Mr. Lowell's Recent Political Verse," which was published in *The Christian Union* of 10 December, 1875. Lowell acknowledged the service in a letter to Mr. Benton which was printed after Lowell's death in *The Century Magazine*, November, 1891. It is so valuable

a witness to Lowell's mind that I give it here again.[1]

To Joel Benton.

Elmwood, January 19, 1876.

Dear Sir, — I thank you for the manly way in which you put yourself at my side when I had fallen among thieves, still more for the fitting and well-considered words with which you confirm and maintain my side of the quarrel. At my time of life one is not apt to vex his soul at any criticism, but I confess that in this case I was more than annoyed, I was even saddened. For what was said was so childish and showed such shallowness, such levity, and such dulness of apprehension both in politics and morals on the part of those who claim to direct public opinion (as, alas! they too often do) as to confirm me in my gravest apprehensions. I believe "The World's Fair" gave the greatest offence. They had not even the wit to see that I put my sarcasm into the mouth of Brother Jonathan, thereby implying and meaning to imply that the common-sense of my countrymen was awakening to the facts, and that *therefore* things were perhaps not so desperate as they seemed.

I had just come home from a two years' stay in Europe, so it was discovered that I had been corrupted by association with foreign aristocracies! I need not say to you that the society I frequented in Europe was what it is at home — that of my

[1] The letter was also printed by Mr. Norton in *Letters*, with a few of the omitted passages filled in.

wife, my studies, and the best nature and art within my reach. But I confess that I was embittered by my experience. Wherever I went I was put on the defensive. Whatever extracts I saw from American papers told of some new fraud or defalcation, public or private. It was sixteen years since my last visit abroad, and I found a very striking change in the feeling towards America and Americans. An Englishman was everywhere treated with a certain deference: Americans were at best tolerated. The example of America was everywhere urged in France as an argument against republican forms of government. It was fruitless to say that the people were still sound when the Body Politic which draws its life from them showed such blotches and sores. I came home, and instead of wrath at such abominations, I found banter. I was profoundly shocked, for I had received my earliest impressions in a community the most virtuous, I believe, that ever existed. . . . On my return I found that community struggling half hopelessly to prevent General Butler from being put in its highest office against the will of all its best citizens. I found Boutwell, one of its senators, a chief obstacle to Civil-Service reform (our main hope). . . . I saw Banks returned by a larger majority than any other member of the lower house. . . . In the Commonwealth that built the first free school and the first college, I heard culture openly derided. I suppose I like to be liked as well as other men. Certainly I would rather be left to my studies than meddle with poli-

tics. But I had attained to some consideration, and my duty was plain. I wrote what I did in the plainest way, that he who ran might read, and that I hit the mark I aimed at is proved by the attacks against which you so generously defend me. These fellows have no notion what love of country means. It is in my very blood and bones. If I am not an American, who ever was?

I am no pessimist, nor ever was, . . . but is not the Beecher horror disheartening? Is not Delano discouraging? and Babcock atop of him? . . . What fills me with doubt and dismay is the degradation of the moral tone. Is it or is it not a result of Democracy? Is ours a "government of the people by the people for the people," or a Kakistocracy rather, for the benefit of knaves at the cost of fools? Democracy is, after all, nothing more than an experiment like another, and I know only one way of judging it — by its results. Democracy in itself is no more sacred than monarchy. It is Man who is sacred; it is his duties and opportunities, not his rights, that nowadays need reinforcement. It is honor, justice, culture, that make liberty invaluable, else worse than worthless if it mean only freedom to be base and brutal. As things have been going lately, it would surprise no one if the officers who had Tweed in charge should demand a reward for their connivance in the evasion of that popular hero. I am old enough to remember many things, and what I remember I meditate upon. My opinions do not live from hand to mouth. And so long as I live I will be no writer

of birthday odes to King Demos any more than I would be to King Log, nor shall I think *our* cant any more sacred than any other. Let us all work together (and the task will need us all) to make Democracy possible. It certainly is no invention to go of itself any more than the perpetual motion.

Forgive me for this long letter of justification, which I am willing to write for your friendly eye, though I should scorn to make any public defence. Let the tenor of my life and writings defend me.

Cordially yours, J. R. Lowell.

The article on Spenser, as I have said, was the last of the series of considerable studies of great authors which Lowell had been writing for the past ten years, and he now gathered the final sheaf into a second series of "Among My Books," which he had hoped to bring out in the fall of 1875, but which did not appear until the spring of 1876. His activity in literature, and the accumulation of his published writings, were making him more steadily a conspicuous figure and calling out appreciation and criticisms. To Mrs. Herrick, who had been collecting material for an article on him, and had applied to him for facts and dates, he wrote, 6 October, 1875, after the appearance of her article: "If I were not pleased with what you have written about me, I must indeed be *difficult*, as the French say. It is not for me to comment on your discrimination, but I cannot be insensible to the truly feminine grace and delicate fervor of sympathy which run through the whole article. . . .

You have given me a real pleasure and a real encouragement. I have never seen any of Mr. Wilkinson's criticisms upon me,[1] but I know no reason to suspect any personal spite. He is ludicrously wide of the mark in what he says of the early reception of my writings at home and the later in England. I never belonged to any clique here, and the highest appreciation I ever received in England (degrees from Oxford and Cambridge) were when the Geneva delegation had left a very bitter feeling against everything American. I say this only for your friendly ears. I dare say I may seem to contradict myself sometimes, for my temper of mind is such that I never have the patience to read over again what I have once printed. As for my grammar, you may be quite easy. I know quite as much about English as Mr. W. is likely to do, and inherited my grammar, which is the best way of getting it. I think (from what others have told me) that you hit the nail on the head in saying that I have a kind of 'vitality.' But it is not wise to discuss one's own qualities. I will only say that if nature had made me as strong in the

[1] The reference is to a volume by Mr. William Cleaver Wilkinson, entitled *A Free Lance in the Field of Life and Letters*, published in 1874, which contained three papers on "Mr. Lowell's Poetry," "Mr. Lowell's 'Cathedral,'" and "Mr. Lowell's Prose." In a letter to Mrs. Clifford (*Letters*, ii. 290) Lowell refers to this book apparently when he says: "You will be glad to hear that a man once devoted an entire volume to the exposure of my *solecisms*, or whatever he chose to call them. I never read it — lest it should spoil my style by making it conscious." The papers on Lowell constitute, however, less than a third of Mr. Wilkinson's book.

driving as in the *conceptive* faculties I should have done more and better.

"I am glad your article is fairly over and out of the way, for now I can enjoy the pleasure of your friendship without any feeling of awkwardness. That I have been a help to you is a help to myself, and I thank you for telling me of it so frankly.

"When I wrote you last I was still very far from well. I am now (though not recovered) very much better, and my wits are beginning to clear again."

His birthday in 1876 found him reflecting on the degree to which he was absconding from active life. "I get so absorbed," he writes, "in the pretty shadows on the surface of Time, that I never notice the flowing of the current, and while I am musing, behold it has brought Next Year abreast of me. . . . I am going to dine with Gray, C. J., this afternoon to meet the Friday Club. I am invited to join it, and have been pondering over my answer these six weeks. I feel as if it might shake me up a little, for solitude is gradually making me numb. But I don't know. I have the best possible Swift in my head, if I could only get him out. I have half written it twice, and am now going to begin again. You don't believe me when I tell you that my mind is sluggish, but it is." Apparently he had planned a paper on Swift of the proportions of one of his *North American* articles; what actually appeared was a brief review of Forster's "Life of Swift" in the *Nation*. He

wrote but little verse, though he was not neglectful of the work of others. "By the way," he wrote to Mr. Howells, 21 March, 1875, "who is Edgar Fawcett? Those 'Immortelles' of his in the last *Atlantic* are in my judgment easily the best poetry in the number. I have been taken with things of his before, I remember. Why *did* you let the other man (whose name I have forgotten) spoil a charming little poem by writing Ac'tæon? I doubt if Artemis would have wasted an arrow in him — but Pallas Athene would have given him the ferule. It was so light and pretty, all the rest of it."

In a nature like Lowell's there is more the appearance of sluggishness than the reality. His industry is evident enough when one adds his published and uncollected writings to his regular academic duties. What may easily have provoked the popular notion of his indolence was the privacy of his life, the fact that he himself was little *en evidence*, and the casual on-looker seeing him sitting for hours over his books and pipe, taking his social recreation only in the seclusion of his own cherished home, and the libraries and dining-rooms of a very small circle of friends, hardly ever going even to Boston, and drawn when on his feet rather to Beaver Brook than to the pavements, — such an one might fancy him almost a scholarly recluse, living anywhere but in the American present.

But a great deal of the bustle of other men's lives had its sphere of activity in Lowell's mind. He was wont to retreat within himself, but it was to reflect on what he saw in the world about

him. As has been seen already, he had commented on public affairs in verse which was not to be credited to his poetic sense so much as to his moral and political insight, and the tide of feeling was rising in his soul. It needed occasion only to bring him more actively into the current of affairs.

The changing of the time of which he had written so caustically had brought about what many to-day are disposed to regard as the lowest ebb of politics within the memory of man. As Grant's second administration drew near its close, there began to be a stirring in the minds of men, and a resolution to reform the administration of government. The spectacle especially of the Southern States held in control by a combination of Northern carpet-baggers and negro politicians, backed by the Federal army, was one which filled with dismay those who had seen in the abolition of slavery the beginning of a new life for the nation; and the sordid view of public life which had resulted from this and from the unchecked abuse of political power in the distribution of public offices as rewards for party service, was leading to a determined effort at a reform of the whole civil service.

Lowell's letters at this time indicate how deeply he felt the needs of the hour. In the spring of 1876 a number of young Cambridge men were inspired with a zeal to better the morale of the Republican party, which was the party in power and the one whose traditions made its better element ardent to purify it from the corruption which seemed to be fastening upon it. The effect of this

rally was to call a large public meeting, and Lowell was invited to preside.

"Though I don't think the function you wish me to perform," he wrote in reply, "quite in my line, I am willing to do *anything* which may be thought helpful in a movement of which I heartily approve. I am not so hopeful, I confess, as I was thirty years ago; yet, if there be any hope, it is in getting independent thinkers to be independent voters."

Here Lowell struck the note which had been the key of his political writing in the agitation against slavery, and that in which all his active political life after this was to be pitched. Independence, not in politics only but in the entire domain of human thought, had indeed been characteristic of all his work heretofore, and it was the solitariness of a life thus attuned which led to this slight expression of dejection. But he had been for all that a leader of the intellectual and thoughtful class in America, and it was a happy omen that collegians were in the group which was now to call him from his study into the field of political life.

Lowell not only presided at the meeting in Cambridge, but he became permanent chairman of the committee then formed for the organization of voters in Cambridge, a function which had been performed hitherto by office-holders under the government. The Congressional district to which Cambridge belonged then included also Jamaica Plain, and similar action was taken there under the leadership of the Rev. James Freeman Clarke.

As a result of the movement Lowell and Dr. Clarke were selected at the district convention as delegates to the Republican convention in Cincinnati which was to nominate a candidate for the presidency.[1]

Lowell was very much interested in the position in which he found himself, nor could he help looking at himself in this new rôle with an amusing distrust. "Last night," he wrote to Leslie Stephen, 10 April, 1876, "I appeared in a new capacity as chairman of a political meeting, where I fear I made an ass of myself. It was got up by young men who wish to rouse people to their duty in attending caucuses and getting them out of the hands of the professionals. . . . I think the row is likely to do good, however, in getting us better candidates in the next presidential election, and waking everybody up to the screaming necessity of reform in our Civil Service."

It was about this time also, apparently, that Lowell's name began to be connected with the diplomatic service of the country. It would seem as if his old friend Robert Carter had interested himself in the matter. At any rate, Lowell wrote him 13 April, 1876: "I am much obliged to you for your friendly interest, but you misunderstood my note to Page. I wrote it in haste to save the mail at John's room, borrowing therefor his last sheet of paper. What I *meant* to say was that if, when the Russian Embassy was offered me, it had

[1] See, for further detail, Mr. E. P. Bliss's statement in *Letters*, ii. 160, 161, footnote.

been the English instead, I should have hesitated before saying *no*. But with the salary cut down as it is now, I could n't afford to take it, for I could not support it decently." A glimpse of his financial embarrassment at this time is seen in a letter to the same correspondent two days later, when, replying to the request for the gift, apparently, of his Fourth of July Ode to a newspaper, he says: "I can't afford to give it away. The greater part of my income was from Western railroad bonds that have stopped payment, and the *Atlantic* (to which I have promised what I may write) will pay me $300 for it." On the 19th of April, he writes again to Mr. Carter: "I return Mr. Fish's letter. There is no more chance of their sending me to St. James's than to the moon, though I might not be unwilling to go. On the old salary I might manage, and it might do my health good. I have little doubt it was offered to L[ongfellow] with the understanding that he would decline. I have not seen him for a few days. But it is too large a plum for anybody not 'inside politics.' It is the only mission where the vernacular sufficeth. Meanwhile you will be amused to hear that I am getting inside politics after a fashion. I shall probably head the delegation from our ward to the State convention."

Lowell went to the National Convention at Cincinnati, like others of the same mind, with the hope of securing the nomination for the presidency for Mr. Bristow of Kentucky, who as a member of Grant's cabinet had shown himself very active in

the prosecution of malfeasants. The fact, moreover, that he came from Kentucky was an additional reason in Lowell's mind. "I believed," he wrote, "that a Kentucky candidate might at least give the starting-point for a party at the South whose line of division should be other than sectional, and by which the natural sympathy between reasonable and honest men at the North and the South should have a fair chance to reassert itself. We failed, but at least succeeded in preventing the nomination of a man [1] whose success in the Convention (he would have been beaten disastrously at the polls) would have been a lesson to American youth that selfish partisanship is a set-off for vulgarity of character and obtuseness of moral sense. I am proud to say that it was New England that defeated the New England candidate." [2]

In a letter written at two different times in the summer of 1876, to Thomas Hughes,[3] Lowell dwells at length upon the political situation and his own hopes and fears. His attitude toward public affairs was that of one who had not abandoned his fundamental beliefs but was questioning the methods of carrying them out, and was distrustful of existing machinery. He reiterates his conviction that the war was fought for nationality, and that emancipation was a very welcome incident. Hence he is inclined to lay the emphasis in reunion on the need of reconciliation with the Southern whites rather than on the protection of the blacks. He is disposed to sympathize with the

[1] Mr. Blaine. [2] *Letters*, ii. 171. [3] *Letters*, ii. 173–178.

Democratic party at the South but cannot overcome his distrust of the party as a whole. He bids his correspondent go slow in England in extending the suffrage, but he reasserts his unshaken faith in the people of his country. As the summer wears away he is more impatient over the confusion of issues, but on the whole thinks he shall vote for Hayes.

Lowell's new interest in politics and his slight active part led his neighbors to wish to send him to Congress as representative from his district, and he was urged to stand, but he resolutely refused, confident that he had not the true qualifications for the office, though he was touched by the confidence shown in him. He did, however, accept the honorable position of presidential elector on the Republican ballot. He let off a little of his mind in the first draft of the verses "In an Album," where the last four lines of the first stanza read: —

> "While many a page of bard and sage
> Deemed once the world's immortal gain
> Lost from Time's ark, leaves no more mark
> Than Conkling, Cameron, or Blaine."

It was in the late summer and early fall of 1876, also, when the political fight was hottest, that Lowell peppered the enemy with the half-dozen epigrams of which he preserved only one, "A Misconception." The allusions in some were to passing incidents, so that footnotes to his two-line epigrams would now be needed. Some with good memory will need no key to unlock this: —

THE WIDOW'S MITE.

Where currency 's debased, all coins will pass.
Ask you for proof ? The Widow's might is brass.

But the most definite public expression of his political thought at this time may be found in the draft of a speech at a caucus in Cambridge which Lowell preserved among his papers. Apparently Lowell wrote this out in advance, but it is not likely that he imported into a political caucus the very academic method of reading a speech.

"I do not propose," he says, "to make a speech. Still less shall I try to captivate your ears or win your applauses by any of those appeals to passion and prejudice which are so tempting and so unwise. Politics are the most serious of all human affairs, and I prefer the approval of your understandings to that of your hands and feet.

"The presidential contest of this year is in some respects unlike any other that I remember. Both parties claim to be in favor of the same reforms in our currency and our civil service, and both have nominated men of character and ability for the highest office in our government. Meanwhile there is a much larger class of voters than usual who are resolved to cast their ballots less in reference to party ties than to what in their judgment is the interest of the whole country. The two parties are so evenly balanced that the action of this class is of supreme importance. Among these are doubtless some wrongheaded men, some disappointed ones, and some who think that any change, no mat-

ter what, may be for the better and cannot be for the worse. But in general these dissatisfied persons are men of more than average thoughtfulness, weight of character, and influence. They feel profoundly that the great weakness of the democratical form of government, as they have studied its workings in this country, is a great and growing want of responsibility in officials, whether to the head of the government or to the country, a great and growing indifference (in the selection of candidates) to the claims of character as compared with those of partisan efficiency or unscrupulousness. We hear, to be sure, of responsibility to the People, but in practice this amounts to very little. Just before election the politicians become tenderly aware of the existence of the People, they recognize their long lost brother, and rush into his arms with more than fraternal fervor. In the same way, just before the 17th of March they show a surprising familiarity with the history of St. Patrick, though at other times we should hardly suspect that their favorite study was the lives of the saints. During the rest of the year the people are busy about their own affairs, and have neither the leisure nor the inclination to be scrutinizing the conduct of their public servants. A responsibility to many is practically a responsibility to none. Now you all know that in battling with the canker-worm, it is around the stem of the tree that we apply our preventives, because that is the highway by which the grubs climb to lay their eggs. The eggs once laid there is no remedy. The stem

by which our political grubs have gone up to deposit the germs of devastation has been our primary meetings and conventions, the adroit management of which has too often given us candidates without that self-respect which makes men responsible to their own conscience, and without that respect for the better sentiment of the country which might spring from the fear of lost repute and diminished consideration. They fear no loss of what they never had. The discontented class of which I have spoken are resolved to make candidates feel their responsibility at the polls, the only point at which they are sensitive. I confess that I share largely in the feeling that leads them to this determination.

"I am and have been in sympathy with the principles of the Republican party as I understand them, but it has no sacredness for me when it degenerates into a contrivance for putting unfit men or tainted men into office, and for making them 'Honorable' by courtesy who are not so by character. When a party becomes an organization to serve only its own private ends, when it becomes a mere means of livelihood or distinction on easier terms than God for our good has prescribed, it has become noxious instead of useful. Now, fellow-citizens, it cannot be denied that the Republican party has suffered by too long and too easy a tenure of office. We ought to be thankful to its opponents for the investigations which have shown us its weak points. Let it never be said that we object to any investigation of character. Let it

always be said that we object to men who need or fear to be investigated.

"It will not do to appeal to the past history and achievements of the party. The greatest of poets and one of the wisest of men has said that —

> 'to have done is to hang
> Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
> In monumental mockery.'

It is by their estimate of the chances of what the party *will* do that independent voters will be guided in their action. It is of no use to tell them what it used to be, nor, when they resent its corruption, to say that things were as bad a hundred years ago. We had hoped the world was growing better. We would rather not need to be consoled than to have the finest consolation that was ever manufactured out of the commonplaces of history. At least I had hoped that we should never hear of poor old Judas again, whose conduct, if it be an argument for anything, would go to prove that one man in every twelve *must* be a knave. When our knaves follow the example of Judas by going straightway and hanging themselves, I shall not object to the recalling of his example from time to time. What we have to do is to purify the party ourselves, and this we can do only by insisting that the men who are offered for our choice shall be men of a character so well established that they are above suspicion and incapable of temptation, at least in its baser forms; we must insist on having such men, or acknowledge that our system of popular government has left us none such.

"It is said that the Republican party cannot be reformed from within. This may or may not be so, but is this less true of the Democratic party? The first printed ballot I ever saw was in Baltimore just fifty years ago, and I remember that it had upon it an American flag and 'Hurrah for Old Hickory!' That 'Hurrah for Old Hickory' introduced into our civil service that evil system which has led to all the corruption in our administration, and which, if not cured, will lead to the failure of our democratical experiment. Many people seem to think that some such divinity doth hedge a Democracy as was once supposed to hedge a king. But perpetual motion is as idle a dream in political organization as in mechanics. It is in the little wheels, in those least obvious to inspection, that the derangement is likely to begin. Are we to expect more vigilance from what used to be called the Jacksonian Democracy? I must be allowed to doubt it.

"But suppose that I am mistaken, suppose that the pretensions of the two parties as to their zeal for reforms in the Civil Service are entitled to equal weight, there are other questions to which the answer is by no means clear. How is it about honest money? about an unmercurial currency that shall not rise and fall with the temperature of Wall Street, that shall neither tempt the would-be rich to unsafe speculation nor cheat the poor of their earnings? Though neither party has been so explicit as I should think it wise to be, yet I believe our chance is on the whole better with the Republicans than with their opponents.

"But there is one other argument which with me is conclusive. Nothing, in my opinion, is more unstatesmanlike, nothing more unwise than to revive sectional animosities for political purposes. Such expedients, though used for temporary effect, are lasting in their disastrous consequences. But scarcely less disastrous would be the fallacious hopes raised in the South by the success of Mr. Tilden. We are not willing to risk any of the results of the nation's victory. One of the most important of those results was the assertion of our indivisible nationality. Mr. Tilden and the party which he directs have always been extreme in their interpretation of the reserved rights of the individual States, going so far even as to include that of rebellion among them. Should such principles prevail, revolution would become constitutional, and we should have another Mexico instead of the country we love. We should be admitting that the war, so costly to our prosperity, so incalculably dear in hopeful lives, was both a blunder and a crime. I for one am not ready for an admission like this. I prefer to feel myself the citizen of a strong country, to feel in my veins the pulses of an invincible nationality, whereof I am a member. An indissoluble union is the chain that holds us to our anchor. Its disjointed links would be old iron for the junkshop."

This is not what one looks for in a speech at a party caucus. Neither the independence of the speaker's attitude nor his moderate adhesion to the party in which he enrolls himself are very effective

instruments, and it is clear that despite Lowell's sympathy with the plain man and his intimate acquaintance with him as illustrated in his "Biglow Papers," he was embarrassed when he came to speak to him in the collectivity of a public meeting, and scarcely let his natural voice even be heard. Much must be referred, it is true, to his inexperience with speaking at public meetings — he was not a speaker in the old anti-slavery days, but his inexperience was due largely to his fastidiousness of temper which made him after all in literature rather than in life pleased with the vision of

> "The backwoods Charlemagne of empires new."

He found his own voice more surely in his study than on the rostrum, and it is to his Fourth of July Ode in this centennial year that we must look for the most comprehensive and most natural expression of his political sentiment. In poetry he found it easiest to reiterate that faith which he had in an elemental America, as it were, a faith which was derived from a belief in God, and that

> "Life's bases rest
> Beyond the probe of chemic test;"

but he refuses for all that to take refuge in a mere blind confidence, admitting a little ruefully that the flight of years had won him

> "this unwelcome right
> To see things as they are, or shall be soon,
> In the frank prose of undissembling noon!"

The democratic principle, too, which he held so stoutly comes to him now as the manifestation of

human life concretely apprehended rather than theoretically conceived, and the development of his own maturer judgment appears in this resolution to find the base of national life in the men who built the nation, and not in the mere speculation of freedom and democracy.

Lowell published the three odes called out by the centennial celebrations in a little volume entitled "Three Memorial Poems," which he inscribed to Mr. Godkin "in cordial acknowledgment of his eminent service in heightening and purifying the tone of our political thought." At the request of his publishers he was also assembling his poems for a new and so far complete collection in what was to be known as the Household Edition. Perhaps the title was in his mind when he wrote in the fall to a correspondent who had expressed his appreciation, "I would rather be a fireside friend and the Galeotto of household love than anything else. I was especially pleased that you had found out how much better the second series of the Biglow is than the first. I had not seen them for years when I had to read them through for a new edition this summer, and I found them entertaining."

In February, 1877, Lowell went to Baltimore to give before the Johns Hopkins University a course of twenty lectures on the literature of the Romance Languages during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with Dante as a central theme. His companion was his friend and colleague Professor Francis J. Child, who at the same time was discoursing on Chaucer. The tenth anniversary of

the founding of the University was observed during their stay, and both men were the recipients of delightful hospitality, while by their lectures and readings and social gifts they made themselves most welcome guests. "J. L.'s good looks and insinuating ways," wrote Mr. Child, "carry off the palm entirely from my genius and learning, but then I am as much fascinated as anybody, and don't mind." "Child goes on winning all ears and hearts," wrote Lowell. "I am rejoiced to have this chance of seeing so much of him, for though I loved him before, I did not know *how* lovable he was till this intimacy." A year later, Lowell writing to Child from Europe recalls the month as one of the pleasantest of his life. Lowell stayed with his kinsman Mr. Spence, but he found a frequent respite from the gayety in which he was involved in a quiet luncheon with his friend Mrs. Herrick, who tactfully forebore to make her luncheons additions to the social functions which excited but wearied as well.

A souvenir of the enjoyment Lowell had in his visit to Baltimore is in a sonnet which he wrote to a young daughter of President Gilman of the university. "I shall assume," he wrote her from Elmwood, 7 April, 1877, "for my own convenience that there were just fourteen roses in the lovely sheaf I found in my room when I came in for shelter from the ill-humor of that February day, so unlike the temperature, both outward and inward, to which Baltimore had accustomed us. I repay them in fourteen verses, and I wish it were as easy

to match the sweetness of your sonnet as its numbers. However, I promised you that I would send it and have not forgotten, but have had so many things to do that I have delayed paying my debt till you have half forgotten your debtor. The two quatrains with which my sonnet gets well under way were written on the spot with your roses comforting two of my benumbed senses. Luckily I wrote them on the back of an invitation which certifies to the date — 'Saturday, 24 February.' The concluding triplets I had partly written down when I was interrupted, and I finished them this morning. I wish it were better, but at least the gratitude will last, if not the sonnet."

TO MISS ALICE GILMAN,

WHO SENT ME ROSES, 24TH FEBY., 1877.

A handful of ripe rosebuds in my room
I found when all heaven's mercy seemed shut out
By clouds morose that dallied with a doubt
'Tween rain and snow: meanwhile mine eyes with bloom
Were comforted, and over Summer's tomb,
Out of your gift rose nightingales to flout
With Easter prophecies the chill without
And sing the mind clear of the season's gloom.
So may your innocent fancy be carest
Ever with impulses to timely deeds
Generous of sunshine, and your life be blest
With flower and fruit immortal, sprung of seeds
Sown by those singing birds that make their nest
In natures thoughtful of another's needs!

Not long after Lowell's return from Baltimore rumors began to fly about that he was to have a foreign mission. Mr. Longfellow notes in his diary,

7 April, 1877 : " In the afternoon Charles Norton called. We talked of Ruskin and Carlyle, and of Lowell's having the English mission." It was not unnatural that public attention should be called to him in connection with some diplomatic post, in view of the somewhat peculiar circumstances connected with his relations to the recent presidential election. He was one of the electors in Massachusetts upon the Republican ballot, and when the issue of the election was in doubt and many believed that Mr. Tilden was the actual choice though Mr. Hayes was nominally chosen, there were voices that called on Lowell to use his technical right and cast his vote for Mr. Tilden. It was a curious comment on affairs. It implied on the part of those who proposed it a confidence that Lowell was independent enough to use this right. I am not sure that any other elector was named who might be expected to take this responsibility. On the other hand, those who urged this course seem to have been blind to the enormous violation of faith involved in such a course. The machinery of the electoral system, however it had been designed at first, had gradually and immutably become a mere device for the registry of the popular choice ; all initiative on the part of the electors was totally cancelled. Lowell himself never had any hesitation. As he wrote to Mr. Leslie Stephen : " In my own judgment I have no choice, and am bound in honor to vote for Hayes, as the people who chose me expected me to do. They did not choose me because they had confidence in my judg-

ment, but because they thought they knew what that judgment would be. If I had told them that I should vote for Tilden, they would never have nominated me. It is a plain question of trust. The provoking part of it is that I tried to escape nomination all I could, and only did not decline because I thought it would be making too much fuss over a trifle."

The actual facts of the appointment of Lowell to the Spanish mission have been so explicitly told by Mr. Howells, who had a grateful part to play in the transaction, that with his permission I copy his account of it. "I do not know whether it crossed his mind after the election of Hayes that he might be offered some place abroad, but it certainly crossed the minds of some of his friends, and I could not feel that I was acting for myself alone when I used a family connection with the President, very early in his term, to let him know that I believed Lowell would accept a diplomatic mission. I could assure him that I was writing wholly without Lowell's privity or authority, and I got back such a letter as I could wish in its delicate sense of the situation. The President said that he had already thought of offering Lowell something, and he gave me the pleasure, a pleasure beyond any other I could imagine, of asking Lowell whether he would accept the mission to Austria. I lost no time in carrying his letter to Elmwood, where I found Lowell over his coffee at dinner. He saw me at the threshold, and called to me through the open door to come in, and I handed

him the letter, and sat down at table while he ran it through. When he had read it, he gave a quick 'Ah!' and threw it over the length of the table to Mrs. Lowell. She read it in a smiling and loyal reticence, as if she would not say one word of all she might wish to say in urging his acceptance, though I could see that she was intensely eager for it. The whole situation was of a perfect New England character in its tacit significance; after Lowell had taken his coffee, we turned into his study, without further allusion to the matter.

"A day or two later he came to my house to say that he could not accept the Austrian mission, and to ask me to tell the President so for him and make his acknowledgments, which he would also write himself. He remained talking a little while of other things, and when he rose to go he said, with a sigh of vague reluctance, 'I *should* like to see a play of Calderon,' as if it had nothing to do with any wish of his that could still be fulfilled. 'Upon this hint I acted,' and in due time it was found in Washington that the gentleman who had been offered the Spanish mission would as lief go to Austria, and Lowell was sent to Madrid."[1] In a letter to his daughter[2] Lowell says further that he had also the choice of going to Berlin.

Mr. Evarts, the Secretary of State, was in Boston at this time, and in a personal conference the preliminary arrangement appears to have been made. Mr. Hayes also came to Boston in June,

[1] *Literary Friends and Acquaintances*, pp. 237, 238.

[2] Elmwood, 5 June, 1877. *Letters*, ii. 194.

and Lowell met him and his wife, and has left a record of the impression they produced upon him, in one of his letters written shortly afterward.[1] The anticipation of this new chapter in his life seems to have given him a divided feeling. The honor of the place half amused and half pleased him. With the ingenuous pride of a college man, he thought how his name would look in capitals in the college triennial, and wished his father, who had a high sense of that dignity, could have enjoyed the sight. He was too fixed in his position before the world to be over-elated at the conspicuousness which the place brought him, and he disliked publicity so much that that side of the business filled him with a sort of dismay. He welcomed the opportunity for enlarging his Spanish studies, and he had an honest desire to represent his country well. "I believe," he wrote to his friend Thomas Hughes, "that I can live my own life (part of the time, at least) in Madrid, and need not have any more flummery than I choose. What unsettled me first was that a good many people wished to see me sent to London, and I was persuaded that I might be of some service there by not living like a Duke, and in promoting a better understanding between the two countries. But my friends were mistaken in supposing that I had been thought of for England. . . . Things are going more to my mind now, and President Hayes made a most agreeable impression on me when he was here the other day. He struck me as simple, honest, and full of good

[1] To Miss Grace Norton. *Letters*, ii. 195, 196.

feeling, a very good American to my thinking. . . . By all means come to Madrid. I shall have a house there, and a spare bed in it always. It would be delightful to take you a drive to the Prado in my own (hired) ambassadorial coach. My 'Excellency' will give me cause for much serious meditation."

It must not be supposed, however, that the prospect was untouched with doubt. "I am by no means sure," Lowell writes to Mr. Reverdy Johnson of Baltimore, shortly after accepting the post, "that I did wisely in accepting the Spanish mission. I really did not wish to go abroad at all, but my friends have been urgent (Godkin among them), and I go."

Mr. and Mrs. Lowell sailed for Liverpool on the Parthia from Boston, Saturday, 14 July, 1877. The agent of the steamship company followed custom in making special provisions for the send-off of a public man, and a comment on Lowell's incapability of filling the rôle in every respect may be read in his good-by note to his friend Mr. Norton, who had received one of the agent's invitations: "You will laugh to-morrow, I hope, when you think of me going down the harbor with the revenue cutter and a steam tug to bring back those who can't part with me this side the outer light. If the agent of the Cunard line had given a month's meditation to devising what would annoy me most, he could have hit on nothing to beat this. When I got his note yesterday morning, I positively burst forth into a cold sweat. But Sunday will bring peace." . . .

CHAPTER XIV

THE SPANISH MISSION

1877–1880

The preparation which Lowell had received for efficient service as Minister of the United States to Spain certainly did not lie in the discharge of so-called political duties. To be delegate to a district convention and presidential elector would scarcely qualify one for a diplomatic post, and to many of his countrymen no doubt he seemed but a dilettante statesman. Yet he was better trained than many a man who has been more energetic in party organization. He was a fair Spanish scholar so far as familiarity with the literature goes. When he first entered on his duties he was, it is true, depressed by his inability to use the language freely; his pride was mortified with the ease with which others could use it, and both his French, of such use in diplomacy, and his Italian got in his way. But a couple of months after he had reached his post he could say: "I can talk now with comparative ease and write notes without fear of scandal. What I wanted was the familiar and every-day forms. I am getting them. But all along I have insisted on conducting my official business in Spanish, and have already astonished 'em at the Foreign Office

here. They say in their Oriental way that I speak Castilian like a native and pronounce it perfectly. Of course I have n't turned goose since I came, to believe all this, but I really am getting on."

But if colloquial Spanish was not at first at his command, he had a very valuable instrument in his familiarity with Spanish literature. The man who knows and loves the best literature of the country to which he is accredited has the key wherewith to unlock the nature of the men with whom he has to deal. Lowell, to whom Calderon was as a nightingale in his study, was not taken unawares when asked to go to Spain. He did not need to cram for an examination. When qualifying himself for his post at Harvard, twenty years before, he had made himself acquainted with Spanish, and both his studies and his teaching since that day had led him into such an acquaintance with its language, literature, and history, that he could say playfully that he knew more Spanish than most Spaniards.

At first sight it might seem that the somewhat isolated and secluded life he had led would have disqualified Lowell for the life of a diplomat ; that greater commerce with men was essential to the training of one whose business it was to deal directly with men in matters possibly of high consequences. But if Lowell was a scholar and somewhat of a recluse, it must be remembered that his most frequent converse was with picked men, and that, moreover, in his studies and reading his attention had been concentrated on literature which was

expressive of great thoughts, great emotions, and great dramatic situations, so that both in life and in literature he was at home and moved with ease in high society.

In diplomatic life, the minister can scarcely escape the consciousness of his representative character. The men with whom he has most to do remind him of it; they are themselves in the same category. The reader of Shakespeare's Histories is struck with the fine impersonation of their countries which the leading characters convey as it were in the tones of their voice. France, England, Scotland become in their impassioned language not geographical entities, nor even nations merely, but incarnate in them. So at courts, aided by the very trappings and ceremonies of their office, private gentlemen become for the nonce figures in a pageant and feel themselves such. They speak, it may be, in their natural voice, and talk for the most part with ministers of state as man to man, with friendly accent and in négligé forms even; but the consciousness of their representative function is never remote, it is always alert and ready against surprise. I suspect it becomes even more easy for a scholar than for a man of affairs to play the part well on such a stage. And it is this same sense which lies behind much of the sensitiveness as to rank and punctilio. The ambassador takes precedence of the minister; thus the minister of a great country is irritated at finding himself in the procession behind the ambassador of a country of a second order, not because his personal pride

is wounded, but because his country has felt a slight. These things touch a man of the great world more than a mere man of the world. The scholar who is absolutely content with high thinking and plain living in his own home may be abnormally sensitive to appearances in the embassy over which he presides. It is an illustration of this that when at his presentation to the King there was some blunder, and Lowell was kept waiting twenty minutes beyond the hour appointed for his audience, and the introducer apologized, Lowell replied it was nothing to him personally, but it should be remembered it was not he, but the United States that was kept waiting.

Another illustration appears in the despatch which Lowell sent Mr. Evarts, 3 February, 1878, detailing the course he pursued when he received a telegram from the President congratulating the King upon his approaching marriage. "I communicated the substance of it," he writes, "to the Minister of State and asked for an audience that I might present it in person to His Majesty. On Monday (the 21st ultimo), accordingly, I was received by King Alfonso in private audience and delivered my message, at the same time adding that it gave me particular pleasure to be the bearer of it. The King in reply desired me to convey to the President his great pleasure in receiving this expression of sympathy from the chief magistrate of a people with which he wished always to maintain and draw closer the most friendly relations. A very gracefully timed compliment to the messenger followed. . . .

"I think that this act of courtesy on the part of the President has really given pleasure here, and has not been entirely lost in the throng of special ambassadors who have been despatched hither with numerous suites to pay the royal compliments of the occasion.

"As these special ambassadors had been received in public audience, I had some doubt whether I ought to consent, as being in this case the immediate representative of the President, to be received privately. But the time was too short for much consideration. The audience was to be at half-past one o'clock, and I received notice of it only the night before. Had it been a *letter* of the President, I should have insisted on its being received publicly. As it was, I thought it most prudent and graceful to admit the distinction between extraordinary ambassadors sent with great pomp to bring gifts and decorations, and a mere minister plenipotentiary, especially as it would have otherwise been impossible to deliver the message at all before the wedding. The difficulty was heightened by my having only just risen from a very severe attack of illness, which made it necessary for me to economize my strength in order to take any part at all in the ceremonies."

To all this must surely be added, that his very abstinence from political party associations at home deepened Lowell's sense of his position. His conception of the nation which he represented was not embarrassed by the vapors too often engendered by "practical politics." He knew his coun-

try, as we have already seen by an examination of his political writings, and even when most full of concern for her integrity, he always kept before him the ideal of a land devoted to freedom and progress. That he was an idealist made him more readily an actor on the diplomatic stage where America met Spain when Lowell conversed with Silvela. But his idealism did not get in the way of his plain business sense. Rather it helped him and supplied that consciousness of dignity which might have forsaken him had he regarded himself merely as a business agent.

The drawback to his satisfaction with the office was his consciousness that he disliked business and was not apt at it; and business after all was what lay constantly beneath all the courtly exchange of civility. "You would have laughed," he wrote to an intimate friend, "if you could have seen my anxiety when I had to give a receipt for an indemnity of five hundred thousand dollars. I was so afraid of making a blunder. It kept me awake night after night, even when I had signed it, and gave me such palpitations of the heart that I have had pains there ever since. It was not myself I was thinking of — but the guild — I did n't wish another of those 'd—d littery fellers' to come to grief." And to Mr. Putnam he wrote: "I like the Spaniards very well so far as I know them, and have an instinctive sympathy with their want of aptitude for business." Of course he relied much on the subordinate officers of the legation, but he knew well that he could not leave the business to

them, and he had, besides, for a while the interest in the details of a life which was novel to him, as well as the pride which would not suffer him to be a mere figure-head.

The Lowells were about a month on their way from Boston to Madrid. They spent a few days in London, and Lowell was in a holiday mood both there and in Paris, where they also made a brief halt in the same pleasant inn in the Latin Quarter in which they had been so much at home three years before. The tranquil enjoyment of little scenes which his letters from the two capitals disclose betokens a mind unvexed by many cares. He was entering upon a new and untried experience, but he was too old to feel an undue excitement, and too well poised to borrow trouble from ignorance of superficial duties. He was rid of the rather irksome and too familiar occupations of the academic life, he was yet in his freedom to assume novel responsibilities, and he set his face toward Madrid with an equanimity which was no doubt heightened by the feeling that he was not Professor Lowell on a vacation, but Minister Lowell about to realize his new function.

The Lowells reached Madrid on the fourteenth of August, and on the eighteenth of the month Lowell was presented at court, the King being at his summer residence at La Granja, about fifty miles from Madrid. He has given a brief narrative of the ceremony [1] which was his initiation into

[1] *Letters*, ii. 200–202.

diplomatic life, and, as we have seen, he began at once his work at the legation, insisting upon using his Spanish in all negotiations. But the first few weeks in Madrid were anything but agreeable, since besides the worries of house-hunting he was tortured with gout, which after a couple of months permitted him to hobble to the office, only if he put on large walking shoes and handled a crutch.

Meantime he had found a pleasant apartment at No. 7 Cuesta de Santo Domingo, with a large endowment of sunshine. Indeed, the sunshine of Spain warmed his spirits thoroughly. "The weather," he writes, "is beyond any I ever saw. I got out on the balcony this morning, and there was all the warmth and, what is more, all the freshness and hopefulness of spring." And to Mr. Longfellow: "It beats Italy. Such limpidity of sky!" After he was well adjusted in his new quarters, he wrote: "Our household is truly *Complutensian*. Our cook is an old Alsacian woman, toothless as one of Gil Blas's robbers. She speaks French, German, Spanish, and perhaps Arabic, for she lived eight years in Algeria. Our chambermaid, Pepa, is a brown-yellow Spaniard with an immense wad of false hair on the back of her head, like all her class here. My valet and factotum is an Italian from Trieste, speaking French, English, and Spanish. His wife (Fanny's maid) is a Parisienne. Since Babel there have been few such chances for learning the languages. My man has four names according to the tongue I address him in, Giacomo, Santiago, Jacques, James. With Carolina

I sometimes jabber a little German. Our rooms are not yet furnished, though we have been in them seven weeks. Except the dining-room. We bought ten old chairs, highbacked and covered with a flowered plush, which oddly enough exactly matched our wall-paper. They are handsome, and I believe were just finished when I bought 'em (period of Philip II.). However, they are worm-eaten, which has a savor of authenticity about it, and the maker has been more successful in reproducing the past than Mareschal McMahon seems to be. By the time I get them home, they will be genuine old Spanish chairs at any rate, and there is such a thing as considering too nicely."

His diplomatic duties at first gave him some concern. He wrote to his daughter, 18 November, 1877: "Mamma has told you of my tribulations with gout — first in one foot, then in t' other. I could not write any letters during those six weeks. And then I had my moral acclimatization to go through with, which is not by any means ended yet. It *was* rather tough at first — in a perfectly strange country, the only stranger, as it were, for all my fellow-diplomats had either been here some years or had experience elsewhere; — unable to speak the language fluently, and in a labyrinth of etiquette where, as in some old gardens, if you take a step in the wrong direction you are deluged with cold water. Well, philosophy is an admirable umbrella, but when we are caught in a sudden shower it 's no use remembering how we left it standing in the corner, as we always do."

Lowell thought himself too old to find the ceremonial parts of his occupation even amusing. They bored him; but he had a genuine human interest in the living part of what he saw and did. It was for him like reading a bit of history, not from books but from men, and it was not long before he had an opportunity of taking part in a ceremony, the marriage of the young King; and in the narrative which he gives of the event, as well as preliminary comments in despatches to the State Department, 13 December, 1877 — 6 February, 1878,[1] he not only gives an agreeable description of the affair, but indicates with some clearness his own personal interest as a student.

"Nowhere in the world," he writes, "could a spectacle have been presented which recalled so various, so far-reaching, and, in some respects, so sublime associations, yet rendered depressing by a sense of anachronism, of decay, and of that unreality which is all the sadder for being gorgeous. The Roman amphitheatre (*panem et circenses*), the united escutcheons from whose quartering dates the downfall of Saracenic civilization and dominion in Spain; the banners of Lepanto and of the Inquisition fading together into senile oblivion on the walls of the Atocha; the names and titles that recalled the conquest of western empires, or the long defeat whose heroism established the independence of the United Provinces, and proved that a confederacy of traders could be heroic; the stage-coaches, plumed horses, blazing liveries, and

[1] Copied in *Impressions of Spain*, pp. 53–72.

running footmen of Louis Quatorze; the partisans of Philip III.'s body-guard, the three-cornered hats, white breeches, and long black gaiters of a century ago, mingled pell-mell with the French shakos and red trousers of to-day; the gay or sombre costumes from every province of Spain, some recalling the Moor and some the motley mercenaries of Lope de Figueroa; the dense and mostly silent throng which lined for miles the avenue to the church, crowding the windows with white mantillas, fringing the eaves and ridge-poles, and clustered like swarming bees on every kind of open ground; — all these certainly touched the imagination, but, in my case at least, with a chill as of the dead man's hand that played so large a part in earlier incantations to recall the buried or delay the inevitable. There was everything to remind one of the past; there was nothing to suggest the future.

"And yet I am unjust. There were the young King and his bride radiant with spirit and hope, rehearsing the idyl which is charming alike to youth and age, and giving pledges, as I hope and believe, of more peaceful and prosperous years to come for a country which has had too much glory and too little good housekeeping. No one familiar with Spanish history, or who has even that superficial knowledge of her national character, which is all that a foreigner is capable of acquiring, can expect any sudden or immediate regeneration. The bent of ages is not to be straightened in a day by never so many liberal constitutions, nor by the pedantic application of theories drawn from for-

eign experience, the result of a wholly different past.

"If the ninety years since the French Revolution have taught anything, it is that institutions grow, and cannot be made to order, — that they grow out of an actual past, and are not to be conspired out of a conjectural future, — that human nature is stronger than any invention of man. How much of this lesson has been learned in Spain, it is hard to say; but if the young King apply his really acute intelligence, as those who know him best believe he will, to the conscientious exercise of constitutional powers and the steady development of parliamentary methods, till party leaders learn that an ounce of patience is worth a pound of passion, Spain may at length count on that duration of tranquillity the want of which has been the chief obstacle to her material development. Looked at in this light, the pomps of the wedding festival on the 23d of last month may be something more than a mere show. Nor should it be forgotten that here it is not the idea of Law but of Power that is rooted in the consciousness of the people, and that ceremonial is the garment of Authority. . . .

"The ceremony over, the King and Queen, preceded by the Cabinet Ministers, the special ambassadors, and the grandees of Spain, and followed by other personages, all in coaches of state, drove at a foot-pace to the Palace, where their Majesties received the congratulations of the Court, and afterwards passed in review the garrison of Ma-

drid. By invitation of the President of the Council, the Foreign Legations witnessed the royal procession from the balconies of the Presidency. It was a very picturesque spectacle, and yet so comically like a scene from *Cinderella* as to have a strong flavor of unreality. It was the past coming back again, and thus typified one of the chronic maladies of Spain. There was no enthusiasm, nothing more than the curiosity of idleness which would have drawn as great a crowd to gape at the entry of a Japanese ambassador. I heard none of the shouts of which I read in some of the newspapers the next day. No inference, however, should be drawn from this as to the popularity or unpopularity of the King. The people of the capital have been promised the millennium too often, and have been too constantly disappointed to indulge in many illusions. Spain, isolated as in many respects she is, cannot help suffering in sympathy with the commercial depression of the rest of the world, and Spaniards, like the rest of mankind, look to a change of ministry for a change in the nature of things. The internal policies of the country (even if I could hope to understand them, as I am studying to do) do not directly come within my province; but it is safe to say that Spain is lucky in having her ablest recent statesman at the head of affairs,[1] though at the cost of many other private ambitions. That he has to steer according to the prevailing set of the wind is perhaps rather the necessity of his position than

[1] Senor Cánovas del Castillo.

the fault of his inclination. Whoever has seen the breasts of the peasantry fringed with charms older than Carthage, and relics as old as Rome, and those of the upper classes plastered with decorations, will not expect Spain to become conscious of the nineteenth century, and ready to welcome it, in a day."

The difference between a despatch and a letter to a friend is scarcely so marked as the likeness. It is a little more studied, has a little more the air of a composition, and fewer sly asides, yet it is after all Lowell speaking of the things that interest him, rather than the American minister aware of an audience in the State Department. In the same despatch he carries forward the narrative by an account of his participation in the ceremonial bull-fight, and in this passage one might fancy him turning aside for a moment to have a few words colloquially with Mr. Evarts and half assuming Parson Wilbur's tone.

"On Friday took place the first bull-fight, at which every inhabitant of Madrid and all foreigners commorant therein deemed it their natural right to be present. The latter, indeed, asserted that the teleological reason for the existence of legations was to supply their countrymen with tickets to this particular spectacle for nothing. Though I do not share in the belief that the sole use of a foreign minister is to save the cost of a *valet de place* to people who can perfectly well afford to pay for one, I did all I could to have my countrymen fare as well as the rest of the world. And so they did, if they were willing to buy the tickets which

were for sale at every corner. The distribution of them had been performed on some principle unheard of out of Spain and apparently not understood even there, so that everybody was dissatisfied, most of all those who got them.

"The day was as disagreeable as the Prince of the Powers of the Air could make it, even with special reference to a festival. A furious and bitterly cold wind discharged volleys of coarse dust, which stung like sleet, in every direction at once, and seemed always to threaten rain or snow, but, unable to make up its mind as to which would be most unpleasant, decided on neither. Yet the broad avenue to the amphitheatre was continually blocked by the swarm of vehicles of every shape, size, color, and discomfort that the nightmare of a bankrupt livery stabler could have invented. All the hospitals and prisons for decayed or condemned carriages seemed to have discharged their inmates for the day, and all found willing victims. And yet all Madrid seemed flocking toward the common magnet on foot also.

"I attended officially, as a matter of duty, and escaped early. It was my first bull-fight, and will be my last. To me it was a shocking and brutalizing spectacle in which all my sympathies were on the side of the bull. As I came out I was nearly ridden down by a mounted guard, owing to my want of any official badge. For the moment I almost wished myself the representative of Liberia. Since this dreadful day 16,000 spectators who were so happy as to be present have done nothing but blow their noses and cough."

In a private letter written after the festivities, Lowell refers to a diplomatic dinner and reception which came at the close, and says: "The uniforms (there are six special embassies here with very long tails) and diamonds were very brilliant. But to me, I confess, it is all vanity and vexation of spirit. I like America better every day." The picturesqueness soon satisfied, and he shows in this despatch how his mind dwelt rather on the life which gave rise to and was typified in the ceremonial. He read it not at all as a supercilious American, whose pride in the barrenness of show at home might be as great as Castilian pride in superfluity of decoration, but as a scholar intent on discovering those fundamental truths of history which are seen all the more clearly through the medium of a mind at home in the rarefied air of a genuine American freedom.

Meanwhile his personal tastes led him to the book-shops and he fell to buying books, easily pardoning any extravagance he might be led into by the reflection that his treasures would go ultimately to the library of his college, where indeed they did finally rest. These dips into the refreshing waves of literature made him conscious of where his real interest lay, but he was nevertheless not a perfunctory giver of his service. "I try to do my duty," he writes to his friend Child, "but feel sorely the responsibility to people three thousand miles away, who know not Joseph and probably think him unpractical." By necessity of his office, he was compelled to a good deal of social activity, and this,

though it brought him in contact with interesting persons, was so opposed to a long habit that it wearied him. He found himself looking critically at the society into which he was thrown. He saw little evidence of exact scholarship in the educated men, and a general disposition toward an indolent attitude regarding all important matters. But the engaging side of the Spanish character appealed to him. As he wrote to Child: "There is something oriental in my own nature which sympathizes with this 'let her slide' temper of the hidalgos."

At this time he began confidentially to whisper to friends at home that he doubted if he could stand it much more than a year; but from the middle of April, 1877, he took a two months' leave of absence and with Mrs. Lowell made an agreeable journey which brought him back in better content to his life in Madrid. They travelled first from Madrid to Tarbes, thence to Toulouse, Carcassonne, Nismes, Avignon, and Arles. From France they went to Genoa, to Pisa and to Naples, whence they took steamer to Athens, where they stayed a week or so. Lowell's official position not only drew upon him a little official ceremony, but it tinctured his reflections also, leading him to observe and note matters which might have some bearing upon international questions or might affect in a way his own special function as minister to Spain.

"I have just come back from the Palace," he writes to Mr. Norton from Athens, 31 May, 1878, "where I was presented to the King, a fine young

Dane, good-looking and intelligent, and with whom I cannot help feeling a great deal of sympathy just now. For never was man or kingdom in a more difficult position. Greece was quite willing to make a snatch at the chestnuts in the fire, even at the risk of burning her own fingers, and they would n't let her. I have seen decayed gentlemen who lived very comfortably on the former glories of their family, and drove about in an imaginary coach of their grandfathers' — but with Greece, if one can't say exactly *noblesse oblige*, it at least makes her uneasy, and the laurels of Miltiades are a wakeful bed. She has an immense claim, and no resources to make it good — not even the documents that prove clear descent. It is curious, but I have not seen a face of the type that statues and medals have taught us to consider Greek. In a regiment that marched by yesterday at least seven eighths of the men, perhaps nine tenths, had the nose of the dying gladiator, which I take it is Slavonic. Yet continuity of language is certainly something, and I am so stupid that I can't get over my astonishment at seeing the street-signs, and hearing the newspapers cried in Greek."

A sudden opportunity to go to Constantinople shortened the stay in Athens, and Lowell had a glimpse of the Orient. "My Eastern peep," he wrote after his return to Madrid, "has been of service in enabling me to see how Oriental Spain still is in many ways. Without the comparison I could n't be sure of it."

The return of the Lowells to Madrid was just

before the death of the young Queen Mercedes, and both in his despatch to the government, dated 3 July, 1878, and in his private letters, Lowell gave expression to more than merely official concern over the sudden taking-off. His despatch, in particular, is full of such details as would be noticed by one genuinely alert, and not merely carrying out the performance of official etiquette. Here, for example, are a couple of passages which show the artist and the man of feeling much more than the diplomat: —

"During the last few days of the Queen's illness, the aspect of the city had been strikingly impressive. It was, I think, sensibly less noisy than usual, as if it were all a chamber of death in which the voice must be bated. Groups gathered and talked in undertone. About the Palace there was a silent crowd day and night, and there could be no question that the sorrow was universal and profound. On the last day I was at the Palace, just when the poor girl was dying. As I crossed the great interior courtyard, which was perfectly empty, I was startled by a dull roar, not unlike that of the vehicles in a great city. It was reverberated and multiplied by the huge cavern of the Palace court. At first I could see nothing that accounted for it, but presently found that the arched corridors all around the square were filled, both on the ground floor and the first story, with an anxious crowd, whose eager questions and answers, though subdued to the utmost, produced the strange thunder I had heard. It almost seemed

for a moment as if the Palace itself had become vocal.

"At the time of the royal marriage I told you that the crowd in the streets was indifferent and silent. My own impression was confirmed by that of others. The match was certainly not popular, nor did the bride call forth any marks of public sympathy. The position of the young Queen was difficult and delicate, demanding more than common tact and discretion to make it even tenable, much more, influential. On the day of her death, the difference was immense. Sorrow and sympathy were in every heart and on every face. By her good temper, good sense, and womanly virtue, the girl of seventeen had not only endeared herself to those immediately about her, but had become an important factor in the destiny of Spain. I know very well what divinity doth hedge royal personages, and how truly legendary they become even during their lives, but it is no exaggeration to say that she had made herself an element of the public welfare, and that her death is a national calamity. Had she lived she would have given stability to the throne of her husband, over whom her influence was wholly for good. She was not beautiful, but the cordial simplicity of her manner, the grace of her bearing, her fine eyes, and the youth and purity of her face, gave her a charm that mere beauty never attains." How the death of the Queen affected Lowell's imagination may further be seen in the sonnet which he then wrote, but which was not published till he collected his final volume of poetry.

The furlough which Lowell had taken greatly refreshed him, and he took up his life again with vigor and gayety, applying himself not only to the duties of the legation, but to the better acquisition of the Spanish language, a fuller knowledge of the literature, and the study of those larger matters of Spanish polity and character with which it became a minister to acquaint himself. "I have come back," he wrote to his daughter, "a new man, and have flung my *blue* spectacles into the paler Mediterranean. I really begin to find life at last tolerable here, nay, to enjoy it after a fashion."

Here is an outline of his days, as he gives it in a letter to a friend: "Get up at 8, from 9 sometimes till 11 my Spanish professor, at 11 breakfast, at 12 to the legation, at 3 home again and a cup of chocolate, then read the papers and write Spanish till a quarter to 7, at 7 dinner, and at 8 drive in an open carriage in the Prado till 10, to bed at 12 to 1. In cooler weather we drive in the afternoon. I am very well, — cheerful and no gout."

He set to work systematically on Spanish with a cultivated Spaniard who could speak no English, and with whom he read and talked every day, besides turning French and English literature into Spanish. "I am working now at Spanish," he writes, 2 August, 1878, "as I used to work at Old French — that is, all the time and with all my might. I mean to know it better than they do themselves — which is n't saying much. Considering how hard it has always been for me to *speak* a language — even one I knew pretty well — I am

making good progress, for I did not begin till my return six weeks ago. Before that I had n't the spirit for it." Of his tutor, Don Herminigildo Gines de los Rios, he adds: "He is a fine young fellow who lost a professor's chair for his liberal principles, and is now professor in the Free University they are trying to found here. I like him very much."

Three months later he wrote: "I am beginning to talk Spanish pretty well, but my previous knowledge of the language is a great hindrance. This may seem a paradox, but it is n't. What I mean is that I know too much to catch it by ear. I understand all that is said to me, and accordingly cannot (without a conscious effort) pay attention to the forms of speech. They go in at one ear and out at the other. But I can write it now with considerable ease and correctness. I am to be admitted to the Academy this month, I believe."

Lowell had been a year now at his post, and could venture to write of the internal politics of Spain with greater assurance because he had a more exact knowledge. His despatch to the government, No. 108, dated 26 August, 1878,[1] is a studied analysis of the character of the parties and leaders that composed the political situation. He begins by explaining his own reticence heretofore. "I have always been chary," he writes, "of despatches concerning the domestic politics of Spain, because my experience has taught me that political prophets who make even an occasional hit, and that in their

[1] See, for the larger part, *Impressions of Spain*, pp. 23–42.

own country, where they may be presumed to know the character of the people, and the motives likely to influence them, are as rare as great discoverers in science. Such a conjunction of habitual observation with the faculty of instantaneous logic that suddenly precipitates the long accumulation of experience in crystals whose angles may be measured and their classification settled, can hardly be expected of an observer in a foreign country. Its history is no longer an altogether safe guide, for with the modern facility of intercommunication, influences from without continually grow more and more directly operative, and yet wherever, as in Spain, the people is almost wholly dumb, there are few means of judging how great the infiltration of new ideas may have been. Where there is no well-defined national consciousness with recognized organs of expression, there can be no public opinion, and therefore no way of divining what its attitude is likely to be under any given circumstances."

In forming his judgment Lowell seems to have used the broad means which great ambassadors have always had recourse to. That is, he did not merely sift the opinions he received from Spaniards, or put himself under the tutelage of any one man, but he attended the debates of the Cortes, he read the more intelligent journals, he talked with leaders of Spanish opinion, and he availed himself of converse with those foreigners travelling in Spain, whose impressions could be valued, and behind all lay an old acquaintance with Spanish history and literature, constantly added to, and an

apprehension of Spanish character, reënforced by personal intercourse. In a word, he went about the business of an American minister to Spain with the same painstaking care and the same breadth of view which, as a scholar, he would employ on the interpretation of a great piece of literature. He did not neglect the commercial side of his business, but he properly made it subordinate, holding that he was not merely representing the country as an eminent consul, but was assisting at the high court of international comity. In the analysis which he attempts, he testifies to the kind of training which he brings to the task, by fixing his attention mainly on the leaders of parties, and studying their characters and aims. Especially is this true of his acute examination of the qualities of Señor Cánovas del Castillo, whom he regards as not only the ablest politician, but capable also of being Spain's most far-seeing statesman, and he makes his observation more effective by the comparison which he draws between him and Señor Castelar.

Mr. Adee, who, when Lowell went to Spain, was chargé d'affaires, in his intelligent and appreciative Introduction to "Impressions of Spain," remarks that "necessarily lacking the knowledge of the true springs of national impulse deep down in the heart of the masses, he dealt with the surface indications, and analyzed the character and motives of the men on top, whose peculiarities most caught his attention." It is quite as much to the point that Lowell did not assume a pro-

found knowledge of the Spanish people, and that he wrote of the phenomena most on the field of his own activity as a minister resident. He was, moreover, too sound a scholar and too shrewd a man to indulge in philosophizing on a nation from the data furnished even by long study and some personal experience. Nevertheless, whatever he lets fall about Spain, as well as his more studied expression, indicates that kind of insight which was one of Lowell's gifts of nature, and stood him in good stead as a critic of books, of men, and of nations.

It may militate against a respect for Lowell's judgment in such matters, that after a score of years the vaticinations which he ventured to express in this despatch have not yet found a realization; yet twenty years is a short period in a nation's life, and these opinions carry with them so much political faith, and are delivered with so much moderation, that they form interesting reading to-day, and may well be repeated here.

"My own conclusion," he writes, "is that sooner or later (perhaps sooner than later) the final solution (of existing political problems) will be a conservative republic like that of France. Should the experiment there go on prosperously a few years longer, should the French Senate become sincerely republican at the coming elections, the effect here could not fail to be very great, perhaps decisive. In one respect, the Spanish people are better prepared for a Republic than might at first be supposed. I mean that republican habits in their intercourse with each other are and have long been

universal. Every Spaniard is a caballero, and every Spaniard can rise from the ranks to position and power. This also is in part from the Mahometan occupation of Spain. *Del rey ninguno abajo* is an ancient Spanish proverb implying the equality of all below the King. Manners, as in France, are democratic, and the ancient nobility here as a class are even more shadowy than the dwellers in the Faubourg Saint Germain.

"In attacking Señor Cánovas the opposition papers dwell upon the censorship of the press, upon the reëstablishment of monachism under other names, and upon the onerous restrictions under which the free expression of thought is impossible. The ministerial organs reply to the first charge that more journals were undergoing suspension at one time during the liberal administration of Señor Sagasta than now, and this is true. The fact is that no party, and no party leader, in Spain, is capable of being penetrated with the truth, perhaps the greatest discovery of modern times, that freedom is good above all because it is safe. Señor Cánovas is doing only what any other Spaniard would do in his place, that is, endeavoring to suppress opinions which he believes to be mischievous. But of the impolitic extreme to which the principle is carried under his administration, though, I suspect, without his previous consent, the following fact may serve as an example. Señor Manuel Merelo, professor in the Instituto del Cardenal Cisneros, published in 1869 a compendium of Spanish history for the use of schools. In speak-

ing of the Revolution of 1868, he wrote, 'It is said that the light conduct (*las léviandades*) of Queen Isabel II. was one of the causes of this catastrophe.' After an interval of nine years, he has been expelled from his chair and his book suppressed.

"If any change should take place, which I confess I do not expect, but which, in a country of personal government and *pronunciamentos*, is possible to-morrow, I think the new administration will find that with the best intentions in the world a country which has been misgoverned for three centuries is not to be reformed in a day. At the same time, I believe Spain to be making rapid advances toward the conviction that a reform is imperative, and can only be accomplished by the good-will and, above all, the good sense of the entire nation. There are strong prejudices and rooted traditions to be overcome, but with time and patience I believe that Spain will accomplish the establishment of free institutions under whatever form of government."

In the course of Lowell's incumbency, General Grant visited Spain on his journey round the world, and the embassy, of course, was busy in its attention to the great American. Lowell's despatch to his government is a model of orderly, dignified statement of the incidents attending Grant's visit, without the least of that free, personal note which characterizes so many of Lowell's despatches. His letters home on the same event naturally are more gossipy, but they express well his admiration of Grant's qualities.

In the spring of 1879 Lowell seems to have been in some uncertainty about his continued stay. There had been some talk of transferring him to Berlin, which he did not desire, but the President emphatically declared his wish that Lowell should remain at Madrid. He longed to be at home, yet since he had become adjusted to the place, he wished to secure the advantage and increase his acquaintance with Spain and the character of the Spanish. He was alert and ready now to make more confident notes regarding the people among whom he was living. In speaking of a friend who had been most kind to them, and who had a quartering of English race in her, he says : —

"She speaks both languages equally well, but is, I think, cleverer in Spanish, and gives it a softness of intonation which is almost unexampled here where the voices of the women are apt to be harsh and clattering like those of the Irish. Does n't Madame Daulnay say something of the kind? (Nothing strikes me more than the rarity of agreeable voices, and (what I never noticed in any other country) one hears in the street the same tones as in the *salon*. I am for once inclined to admit an influence of climate. To jump from the physical to the moral, the Spaniards are the most provincial people conceivable, as much so as we were forty years ago. It is comfortable, for they think they have the best of everything — even of governments, for aught I know. But the everything must be Spanish. Even their actors they speak of in a way that would be extravagant even

of Rachel, and I never saw worse. Perhaps the most oriental thing in this semi-oriental people is the hyperbole of praise which the critics allow themselves. It is quite beyond belief. The press, by the way, at least that of Madrid, is remarkably decorous, and never hints at private scandal. It may be because the duel is still a judicial ceremony — though hardly, for there is never any harm done. It may be that every one is conscious of a skylight in his own roof, through which a stone might come. On the whole, I think it is a relic of the old Spanish *hidalguia*, of which in certain ways I think there is a good deal left. But I don't pretend to know the Spaniards yet — if ever I shall. When a man at sixty does n't yet know himself, he is apt to get startled and carried off by the readiness with which he hears shallow men pronounce judgment on a whole people. The only way to do this, I suppose, would be to read all history, to compare the action of different races or nations under similar circumstances (if circumstances ever are similar), and then, eliminating all points of likeness common to human nature, to analyze what was left, if anything should be left."

Since it was determined that he should continue to be minister to Spain, Lowell proposed to use his yearly furlough by a hurried visit home in the summer of 1879, leaving Mrs. Lowell at Tours. "I wish Fanny could spend the summer with you in Maiche," he writes to Mr. John W. Field who, with his wife, had been their companions for a while in Spain; "but we both think the other plan

wiser, though not so agreeable. She will learn more French in Tours, and I think we can find a good family for her to go into through the French *pasteur* or the British chaplain, for there are both in the town. I hope to be in Paris by the 25th, and to find you still here. Delay for a day or two, I beseech you, for my sake. I can't stay long, for I have to give a week to my friends in England on my way through. I can hardly contain myself at the thought of going home. It excites me more than I could have conceived — at my time of life! Were I as young as you it would n't be surprising."

This was written 15 June, 1879. On the 20th he wrote a line to the same friend to say that they could not start that day, as they had intended, and he could not say when they should, since Mrs. Lowell was not well enough to travel. "Nothing serious," he adds, but as the days passed his tone changed. Serious indeed her illness proved to be. On the 9th of July he wrote: "Twice yesterday the doctors thought all was over. No motion of the heart could be detected — the hands and feet and nose became cold — and the dear face had all the look of death — the eyes altogether leaden and fixed. She had been without speech for twelve hours. What speech she had had for several days had been mere delirium. Suddenly at about six in the afternoon she revived as by a miracle, said she wished to be changed to another bed, was willing to take stimulants in order to strengthen her for it, and insisted that she could move herself

from one bed to the other. This, of course, was out of the question. After being changed she was perfectly tranquil, though excessively weak. During the operation she spoke French to the Sœur who is nursing her, English to me, and Spanish to her maid, all coherently. Both doctors declared they had never seen such a case, or heard of it, and that according to all experience she ought to have died ten times over and days before. I have had two, one to relay the other, so that one could be at her bedside all the time. One has slept in the house — when he *could* sleep. The question now is of building up strength. It has been typhus of the most malignant kind. That has run its course. All danger is not yet over, but hope has good grounds. The chances are now in her favor, especially as she wishes to live. I will tell you more hereafter. God be praised!"

But the recovery was very slow, with many relapses and with periods of mental disorder. The original purpose was held to as long as it seemed possible, but at last, as summer passed into autumn and autumn into winter, it was plain that all plans of travel must be abandoned. Mr. Field made them a flying visit, then both Mr. and Mrs. Field came to Madrid to be with them and give them help and comfort. Their friends Señor and Señora de Riaño were most attentive, and Mr. Dwight Reed, Lowell's secretary, had been almost indispensable. "I should have gone quite desperate without him," Lowell writes; and again, 18 October: "Reed has been a great help. He comes every day to dinner

and distracts me a little with rumors from the outer world. He is a thoroughly kind-hearted and affectionate fellow. But I can't tell you what the loneliness of my night has sometimes been, when I have heard the clock strike every hour and every quarter till daylight came again to bring the certainty that she was no better."

It was not till the end of December that Lowell could speak and write of his wife with anything like relief from the burden of anxiety. During this time he took long walks with his friend Mr. Field, and attended to his necessary work at the legation. His spirits began to rise, but the strain he had been undergoing had been intense. Later, when the critical condition was over, though relapses still occurred, he could rehearse something of his experience: "I have had a very long and very terrible trial, which the strange country and alien tongue have made worse, and these ups and downs almost desperate. And yet without the intervals of reason and hopeful convalescence from time to time, I know not how I could have endured it. Indeed I cannot now comprehend how I pulled through. Friendship has helped us, it is true. During the first weeks Doña Emilia de Riaño (Gayangos's daughter) came every night to watch with Fanny, and her husband, Don Juan, came to see me every day. And my secretary, a most true-hearted, affectionate fellow, sat up with me night after night when I could not sleep, and kept me from eating into myself all the time. Otherwise I was without even an acquaintance, for everybody

leaves Madrid during the summer. Lately the dear Fields have been a great prop.

"If I could only get her away! But that is out of the question at present. And all the while I have had to write cool little bulletins to Mabel, turning the fair side outward when my heart was aching with anxiety and apprehension. I must have expiated many sins this summer. I feel now as if nothing could kill me, and am saddened more than ever with a conclusion arrived at long ago by experience, that this poor human nature of ours *gets used* to almost anything — a conclusion of far-reaching and, in some ways, disheartening consequence."

As the year waned, Lowell found himself required to give his attention to the change of the Spanish ministry, a political event which caused more excitement than he had seen at any time during his stay in Madrid. He analyzed the situation in his despatch to the government, No. 222, dated 15 December, 1879, and in his conclusion wrote: "It is hardly yet time to estimate the effect of recent events on the peninsular or colonial destinies of the country, but the result thus far has been to weaken the man who has hitherto been acknowledged leader and inspirer of the Liberal-Conservative, and one might say therefore of the Dynastic, party of Spain. Yet it should be remembered in estimating his chances that he is a man of far greater resources, of prompter courage in taking responsibility, and of

more convincing and persuasive oratory than any of his contemporaries and rivals in party-leadership. All sorts of wild rumors are in circulation, but I am inclined to await events rather than to trust in the vaticinations of journalists who mutually excite and outbid each other in the bewildering competition of immediate inspiration."

Twelve days later, in despatch No. 223, Lowell returned to the subject of the change of ministry, and after some shrewd and witty conjectures as to the course of events, drawn in part from his study of the Spanish mind, he took up a more serious matter.

"The crucial question for the new cabinet will not, I conceive, arise from domestic politics, but rather from the economic reforms demanded by the Island of Cuba. Señor Cánovas assured me a week ago that he 'was ready and should be glad to concede any reforms that would not produce a deficit in the Cuban budget, but that he could not consent to make the island a burden on the peninsula.' The minister of Ultramar said substantially the same thing to me last evening. I told him smilingly that I had a deep interest in the matter, because I feared that I should have my hands full of Cuban claims if they delayed much longer.

"The Cuban deputies and senators are, I believe, very much discontented with the turn things have taken. Several have already gone home, and more are to follow. The affairs of Cuba certainly look ominous, but those who prophesy a general movement for separation there seem to forget that

the island is inhabited by two distinct and mutually suspicious races, and that the whites, being of Spanish origin, are as obstinately divided in political sentiment as their kinsmen here. General Grant's visit to Cuba seems to attract some attention. The Minister for Foreign Affairs asked me about it yesterday. I answered carelessly that I knew nothing more than what I saw in the newspapers; that the same motives no doubt carried the general thither that had carried him to Europe and Asia; that he was also to visit Mexico, a circumstance which I had seen connected by some journalists with an apocryphal movement in that country for annexation to the United States. You can infer what rumors are rife by a question asked me by the Pro-nuncio here, 'whether negotiations were on foot for a purchase of Cuba by the United States.' I told him that such a report was very likely to arise from the well-known fact that General Prim when in power had favored such a scheme, and turned the conversation to something else."

Early in 1880, entirely without Lowell's knowledge or motion, a suggestion from one or two friends, conspiring with the wishes of the State Department at Washington, led to the offer of a transfer from Madrid to London. On 22 January, Lowell wrote to his daughter: "Day before yesterday I was startled with a cipher telegram. My first thought was 'Row in Cuba — I shall have no end of bother.' It turned out to be this: 'President has nominated you to England. He regards

it as essential to the public service that you should accept and make your personal arrangements to repair to London as early as may be. Your friends whom I have conferred with concur in this view.' You see that is in very agreeable terms, and at least shows that Government is satisfied with my conduct here. I was afraid of its effects on mamma at first; but she was pleased, and began at once to contrive how I could accept, which she wished me to do. I answered: 'Feel highly honored by the President's confidence. Could accept if allowed two months delay. Impossible to move or leave my wife sooner.'"

How intimately Lowell connected the change with the condition of his wife, and how her state subdued any exhilaration he might have felt, appears further from a letter written 13 February, 1880, to a friend who had been moving in the matter at home. "I did not know that you had any hand in it when I wrote to Mr. Evarts and told him that had I been consulted I should have had grave doubts about accepting. Accordingly I wish you would contrive to let them know at Washington that I was in utter ignorance of what my friends were doing. Indeed, I hardly know even now what I shall (or rather what I can) do. When the telegram came Fanny had been going on well for six weeks, but about a fortnight ago came another relapse and she is now in a very nervous state again, — not absolutely out of her head, but incapable of controlling herself. . . . If this relapse should prove transitory like the others,

I shall probably be obliged to leave Fanny here, and go to London for my presentation, and then come back on leave. For I cannot very well renounce the appointment now after having consented to accept it. Fanny was so well when the telegram came that I did not hesitate to consult her about it. She was very much pleased and insisted on my accepting, but now I have the dreadful suspicion that it was the excitement of this news that upset her again. It is true that the change did not show itself for more than a week, and there are reasons for attributing it to physical causes, but I cannot shake off the bitter reproach of having been imprudent. And yet what could I do? The doctor had told me that in a month at farthest I should be able to move her, and she was so perfectly herself then that I had no fears. It is now twelve o'clock (noon) and she is still asleep. The nurse thinks her better. She woke for a few moments, took some beef tea, and dropped off again. Sleep is always good for her. I hope it is a good sign that this relapse has not been so bad as the last before it. Before that she had been better for a few days only and I was never sure that the excitement of the brain was more than diminished. But when this began she had been perfectly self-possessed for weeks, and we took great comfort together in the twenty-third psalm. I am glad I was born long enough ago to have some *superstitions* left. They stand by one somehow, and the back feels that it has a brother be-

hind it.[1] I long to be at home again, and it will not be a great while now. If we get to England, it is more than half way."

Lowell carried out the plan he had outlined. His friends, Mr. and Mrs. John W. Field, were in Madrid, and he left Mrs. Lowell under their watchful supervision, and went reluctantly to England, reaching London 7 March, 1880. His friends kept him informed daily by telegraph and letter of the condition of the invalid, and it so chanced that she had another relapse shortly after he had left her. He was in despair, and heaped reproaches upon himself for having gone; yet when he reasoned, he saw he had done only what he must do. A more reassuring telegram came on the 9th of March, and on the 14th he was persuaded that Mrs. Lowell had issued from this crisis and come fairly out on the other side. In a week more, he had had his audience with the Queen, and taking brief leave of absence, had set out for Madrid, whence he was now able to remove his wife to England. The life of both of them was brightened during the summer that followed by the coming of Mr. and Mrs. Burnett on a brief visit from America.

[1] "Bare is back without a brother behind it."
Norse Proverb.

CHAPTER XV

THE ENGLISH MISSION

1880–1885

The two and a half years that Lowell passed at Madrid formed an excellent preparation for the more important post which he was to occupy near the Court of St. James. The etiquette of a high diplomatic position does not differ greatly in the different capitals; if anything, more punctilio would be observed in Madrid than in London. It was something, at any rate, to have become wonted to the function of a minister plenipotentiary. But this was a trifle compared with the advantage which Lowell enjoyed in the possession now of self-confidence. He had tried on the coat and found it fitted him well; he could wear it in London where he would be in a far more conspicuous position. He had practised the diplomatic art in a country where the language was foreign and the race unfamiliar, and if in his short residence he could, with some assurance, analyze the internal political conditions, he might hope more quickly to be able to apprehend nice discriminations in the current politics of a country where he was at home in language, literature, and history.

It is scarcely to be doubted that his performance of diplomatic duties in Spain had made it easy for the President to appoint him to the highest foreign station. But it is also likely that the choice was made mainly upon the ground of Lowell's fitness to act as a mediator between the two countries. With the exception of Motley, there never had been an American minister to England who was first and foremost a man of letters, and yet in no other field of human endeavor was there so great a community of intelligence. Literature had been honored in its representatives in many courts of Europe and in consular offices, but the presumption is that heretofore political and commercial relations with England had been of so complex a character that it was thought desirable to have a trained man of affairs or of law and statesmanship at the post. Moreover, it was a great political prize, and men of letters are, as a rule, non-combatants in politics. But Lowell had been initiated in Spain, and it was a far more simple process, so far as political effect might be considered, to transfer him to England than to have made that a direct appointment.

The educated men of America were delighted with the appointment. They felt at once that they had a spokesman. And it may fairly be said that Americans generally were gratified; for a man of letters who has won high recognition, especially if his work has been in the field of poetry, history, or general literature, occupies a secure place in the regard of his countrymen, and is subject to less

suspicion or jealousy than one in any other conspicuous position. By its very nature a literary reputation is widespread and not local. A very great lawyer, unless he has also been in the public eye as a member of government, is taken on trust by all but his professional brethren. A great author through the process of growing great has become known to increasing numbers of his countrymen. It is doubtful if any other author, save Longfellow, would at once have been so accepted by Americans as their proper representative in London.

On the other side, though the English as a great reading body are not very familiar with American literature, the leaders of opinion, the class that stands nearest the government, know it generously, and while it would be necessary to make the acquaintance of a representative of American law, business, or politics, a representative of American letters and scholarship would already be a familiar name. Certain it is that Lowell in going to London went at once into the midst of friends. He had been there but two or three days when he wrote: "I am overwhelmed already with invitations though I have not put my arrival in the papers;" and a few days later: "I lunched with Tennyson yesterday. He is getting old and looks seedy. I am going in to take a pipe with him the first free evening. Pipes have more thawing power than anything else."

And yet it must not be forgotten that Lowell himself had been a frank critic of England and

carried in his own mind a temper which it might seem would be in the way of a perfectly cordial relation. In his political papers and in the second series of the "Biglow Papers" he had been very outspoken. His well-known article on "A Certain Condescension in Foreigners," with its pungent sentences, was not easily to be overlooked, and there is a letter[1] which Mr. Norton prints, written in 1865, that may be taken as a truthful report of the attitude held by Lowell toward England during the great war, and modified only slightly by time. There was therefore a little consciousness on his part as if he were not wholly a *persona grata*, and also that he must stand by his colors, which gave him a certain brusqueness in his early public appearances. It did not take long, however, for him to adjust himself in his new relations, for after all it was the greater England to which he was sent, and the world with which he came immediately into contact was very hospitable. At the same time, throughout his stay in England he showed a certain vigilance as the champion of American institutions, speech, and manners which gave him the air of combativeness. An Englishman who was often his host said: "I like Mr. Lowell. I like to have him here. I keep him as long as I can, and I am always in terror lest somebody shall say something about America that would provoke an explosion." Mr. Smalley, who quotes this, adds that Lowell had seen the inside of more country houses in England than any American who ever lived;

[1] *Letters*, i. 343.

and that there was not one in which he had not let fall some good American seed.[1]

"Sometimes," says Max Müller, "even the most harmless remark about America would call forth very sharp replies from him. Everybody knows that the salaries paid by America to her diplomatic staff are insufficient, and no one knew it better than he himself. But when the remark was made in his presence that the United States treated their diplomatic representatives stingily, he fired up, and discoursed most eloquently on the advantages of high thoughts and humble living."[2]

The official business which occupies an American minister in England is the formal occasion for accrediting him to the Court; but there has been a growing disposition to treat this as after all a secondary consideration beside the less tangible one of increasing good feeling between the peoples of the two countries. Special envoys, telegrams, and despatches might serve for the transaction of business, but just as the countless personal letters which pass between correspondents on both sides of the Atlantic go to make the invisible web which unites the two nations, so the personal intercourse which the American minister has with Englishmen may have a weighty effect in preserving an *entente cordiale*.

The English more than any other nation have cultivated the dinner-table and the social meeting for the purpose of exchanging ideas regarding pub-

[1] *New York Tribune*, 16 August, 1891.
[2] *Auld Lang Syne*, p. 179.

lic affairs. Where an American public man will send for a reporter of a widely read newspaper if he has some important message to deliver to his constituents or the people at large, the Englishman will accept an invitation to a dinner of some society, and take that occasion for making a speech which will be reported and commented on in all the great dailies of the city and the provinces. Dinners, unveilings, cornerstones, meetings of societies, — these all become the accepted occasions for the propagation of ideas, and the most unrhetorical people in civilization blurt out their views at such times with a certain scorn of eloquence and admiration of candor. Moreover, the smallness of the great legislative chambers conduces to the conversational tone, and thus public speakers are trained to the disuse of oratory.

It was natural that Lowell should be in demand on such occasions, and it was inevitable that he should make a remarkable impression. He had for years cultivated the art of speaking to small assemblies when he had a congenial subject and a responsive audience. He had the readiness of a practised writer, and he had above all a spontaneousness of nature which made him one of the best of conversationalists. It was but a slight remove from his lecture-room at Harvard, or his study at Elmwood, to an English dinner-table, and the themes on which he was called upon to speak were very familiar to him. Literature, the common elements of English and American life, the distinctiveness of America, these were subjects on which

he was at home, and he brought to his task a manner quiet yet finished by years of practice. Had set orations been his business, he would scarcely have made so remarkable an impression as he made by his off-hand speeches. Yet it must not be supposed that these were careless, impromptu affairs. He was helped by his readiness, but he did not rely upon it. He thought out carefully his little address, and sometimes wrote it out in advance even when he made no use of manuscript. It was not unalloyed pleasure. "I am to speak at the Academy dinner to-morrow," he writes to a friend, after he had had a couple of years practice in such functions, "which does not make me happy, — and not a fit word to say has yet occurred to me. They think I like to speak, I 'do it so easily.'" He was not one to rise with the declaration that he had nothing to say, and then to say it. He respected his audience, and above all, with all his bonhomie, he never forgot that he was not a private guest, but the representative of a great nation. Not that he always harped on the one string of a community of nature and interest in the two countries, but he remembered that he was invited not simply as a man of letters but as the American minister.

When Lowell went to England he apprehended difficulty in maintaining the position of an American minister on his salary, which could not greatly be increased from his modest fortune. Indeed, he said frankly that it would have been quite impossible to play the host as it should be played, except

for the unhappy fortune which compelled Mrs. Lowell to withdraw from society. His friends told him, with that candor which makes English society at once so refreshing and so amusing, that since Mrs. Lowell could not entertain, he was quite at liberty to accept all manner of invitations, and be under no obligation to return them. So his public duties called him in many directions socially, and he was able, besides doing a little business by the way in these diversions, to see the best of the intellectual life of the day. He had a choice group of friends who had known him before he was a public man, and his position gave him the entrée in all society, but he whispered: "I think on the whole I find no society so good as what I have been accustomed to at home."

All this brought him, moreover, an endless correspondence which quite effectually interfered with the friendly letters which had been so natural an outlet of his moods. "Did you ever happen," he writes to Mr. Field, 20 August, 1880, "to be watching the top of a post when a snowstorm was beginning? You would have seen first a solitary flake come wavering down and make a lodgment, then another and another, till finally a white nightcap covered the whole knob. My head is very like that wooden protuberance, and that 's the way letters descend upon it. While I am answering one a dozen more have fallen, and if I let a day go by, I am overwhelmed. And days go by without my knowing it. You tell Mabel that five have passed since you wrote — which is simply absurd. I think it was about fifteen minutes ago that I got it."

"During Mr. Lowell's service as Minister to England," writes Mr. R. R. Bowker, who was at this time resident in London, "Mrs. Lowell was constantly an invalid, as the after effect of typhus fever while in Spain, and it was delightful to see Mr. Lowell's gallantry — for no other word expresses it — as she was brought down in her invalid chair to the dining-room or drawing-room. But she never lost the happy laugh so characteristic of her, and her charm of direct and pleasant manner. Her condition made it impossible for Mr. Lowell to give receptions or large dinners, so that his household guests were confined to a few Americans. In an invitation to dine on Christmas day of 1880, he writes: 'We shan't be very jolly, but there will be a spice of home.' It was at that dinner, I think, that Mrs. Lowell had quite set her heart on having cranberry sauce with the turkey, and so had obtained from that wonderful American storehouse at 45 Piccadilly a supply of cranberries. But the servants, who had mostly come with the Lowells from Spain, could not be made to understand what was wanted, and it was only when, two or three courses after the turkey, Mrs. Lowell hit upon calling for the 'compote rouge' that we obtained our cranberry sauce as a separate course. . . .

"Mr. Lowell was always charmingly gallant, and on one occasion at the house in Lowndes Square there was present a young American actress from whom he asked some recitation. She offered to read the balcony scene from 'Romeo and Juliet' but said she had no Romeo, whereupon Mr. Lowell

volunteered, the Juliet reciting from behind the sofa, and the most charming of Romeos, though somewhat elderly for the part, reading from in front."

The duties of his office in the first part of his service were not onerous except as multitudinous details bring weariness, but the long illness of President Garfield during the summer of 1881 brought a strain upon the emotions, and called for the constant exercise of a refined courtesy. For, aside from the formal exchange of sympathy which would be inevitable under such circumstances, there was that spontaneous and varied expression of grief on all sides, to which Lowell refers with so much feeling and such exquisite reserve of speech in the address on Garfield which was given at the Memorial Meeting in Exeter Hall, 24 September, 1881, and is preserved in "Literary and Political Addresses." Lowell was there speaking to Americans in the presence, as it were, of all England, and the note of sobriety and deep feeling and strong faith which he struck still has the beauty and richness with which it fell on the ears of his sympathetic audience. He was constantly called upon during that anxious season of the President's illness to respond to letters of sympathy. A despatch which he sent to the Secretary of State a fortnight after the blow shows the same dignity in his official communication, and illustrates also the atmosphere in which he was living throughout the summer. It is No. 219, and is dated 16 July, 1881: —

"Warm expressions of sympathy with the President, with Mrs. Garfield, and with the people of the United States, and of abhorrence of the atrocious attempt on the President's life have reached this Legation from all parts of England and Scotland. From the Queen to the artisan, the feeling has been universal and very striking in its manifestation. The first question in the morning and the last at night for the first ten days after the news came was always: 'How is the President?' Had the President's life not been spared, the demonstration of feeling would have been comparable with that which followed the assassination of Mr. Lincoln.

"The interest of the Queen was shown in an unusually marked way, and was unmistakable in its sincerity and warmth. By her special request all our telegrams were at once forwarded to her at Windsor. At Marlborough House, on the 14th she sent for me, in order to express in person her very great satisfaction that the condition of the President was so encouraging.

"I need not waste words in telling you with what profound anxiety your telegrams were awaited, nor how much encouragement and consolation were brought by the later ones. I may be permitted to thank you, however, for the entire composure which characterized them, and which enabled me to maintain my own while prophets of evil were hourly sending me imaginary news.

"The impression produced here by the President's dignity and fortitude may be almost called a

political event, for I believe that it has done more to make a juster estimate of American character possible here than many years of commercial or even social intercourse would have done."

It was with a great sense of relief from tension, after the death of the President, that Lowell took a leave of absence, and made a short trip to Italy. "I am just starting," he writes to T. W. Higginson, 8 October, 1881, "for the continent on a leave of absence which I sorely need. Wish me joy, I am going to Italy! Whether I may not find somebody else in my chair at the Legation when I come back is one of those problems that I cannot solve, and care little about, though now that I have made friendships here I should like to stay on a little longer. Did you know that I have five grandchildren?"

Unfortunately Mrs. Lowell was not sufficiently restored to health to accompany him, but he had the good fortune to find Mr. and Mrs. Field at the end of his journey. "We reached Flushing," he wrote Mrs. Lowell from Frankfort, 10 October, "at half-past six in the morning and there took the train for this place. We travelled several thousand miles, as it seemed to me, through Holland, every now and then seeing a hunchbacked church gathering its village under its wings like a clucking hen when she sees the hawk in the air, at every turn a windmill and low fields bordered with trees that always look just beginning to grow — Heaven knows why. After crossing the Prussian frontier, the dead level continued as far as Cologne. The

only difference was that the trees were larger and often one saw pretty linden-alleys leading up to the little towns. The railway officials had a more close-buttoned military air, and were always saluting invisible superiors."

On the 12th he wrote from Weimar: "I left Frankfort at noon on Monday and got here towards seven in the evening. The first half of the journey was through one of the loveliest valleys (of the broad and basking kind) I ever saw. The only name I recognized in this part of the way was Offenbach, where Goethe had his adventures with Lilli a hundred and more years ago, but after passing Elm the names grew more familiar and famous. *Fulda*, Gotha, Erfurt, *Eisenach*. Weimar is a neat little capital which looks about as large as Salem, and where the one stranger is as much stared at as there. *Why* it is a capital, and especially why it should be where it is, puzzles me. The park is really delightful, with fine trees and one of the most beautiful streams running through it I ever saw. The water is so clear as to seem almost luminous, the water-mosses are as green as those of the sea, and some horse-chestnuts that had fallen in shone like live coals. I walked about the town all the forenoon."

He paid a visit to Goethe's house and the next day went on to Dresden, where he reflected that it was just twenty-five years since he was living there, a young man then, an old man now, but that he should find the Sistine Madonna and a few other old friends as young as ever. From Dresden he

went to Venice, and there he found his friend Mr. Field. "He is as young and social as ever," he wrote to Mr. Norton, 31 October; "has made the acquaintance here of everybody he did n't know before, and goes with me to Florence on Thursday. The Brownings have also been here, but go to-morrow morning. The weather has been *brutto assai*, only two partly fine days during the time I have been here, and to-day it rains. We hear of three inches of snow at Vicenza, and I can well believe it, so cold has it been. *Che tempo straongante!* Still, Venice has been beautiful and dear for all that. Browning begins to show his seventy years (he will be seventy next February) a little, though his natural [force] be not abated. I hear that I am to stay in England, all rumors to the contrary notwithstanding.[1] Fanny continues better. She did not venture to come with me. I shall probably go on as far as Rome, and get back to London in time for the best fogs."

To Mrs. Lowell he wrote from Venice, 1 November: "To-day the sky is bright for the third time since my arrival. All the other days have been cloudy or rainy, with a cold *tramontana* blowing steadily and strongly. . . . You remember that Lady Gordon told me I should find a *bateau mouche* plying on the Grand Canal. I did not expect to be personally inconvenienced by it; but as it lessened the custom of the gondoliers they have all struck work this morning, and one can't

[1] The succession of Mr. Arthur to the presidency naturally set flying all sorts of rumors about a fresh deal in high offices.

get a *barca* for love or money. Poor fellows, they will find, as others have done, that steam is stronger than they. . . . I have given up Rimini owing to the cold, and shall start for Florence day after to-morrow with Field, who is younger and livelier than ever, — and makes more acquaintances every day than I should in a year."

The two spent a week in Florence and then went to Rome where they foregathered with Story, and after a few days there Lowell set out alone on his return to London. He made a brief stay in Paris, and wrote thence to Mr. Field, 29 November, 1881: "I walked a good deal yesterday and felt very well, but to-day my head aches and things have come back. I met young Longfellow, who was to start for London last evening; also Thornton Lothrop, who came back with me to my hotel (where, by the way, I have a small suite — drawing-room, dining-room, two bedrooms with their own door of entrance on the staircase — first floor — for twenty-five francs, *service y compris*), and gave me heaps of Boston and Cambridge news. I am going to breakfast with him at the Bristol presently. I called at the Hôtel de Lorraine [1] and met the Revolution in person. The whole Hôtel de France part — the whole inside that is — was a heap of rubbish in the street. With some trouble I penetrated to Madame Guillaume, who led me into a tiny cavern in the rear, where I found Madame Garrier transformed into a cave-dweller. I expected to hear the growl of the *ursus spelunca*,

[1] The old inn at which he and the Fields had formerly stayed.

or whatever they call him. The darkness of a pocket (without any *chink* in it) would be illumination compared with it. . . . But Madame was very cordial. Presently Marie came in grown a tall girl and with very pretty manners. I took her out into the light and found her the image of her father. Him I did not see. Doubtless he was talking politics or taking snuff with some gossip or other of his. I remember he always disappeared in moments of crisis like the repair of the *salle à manger* which took place in my time. He is a singed cat, having seen two revolutions and the Commune."

It was after his return to London that Lowell was in the thickest of the contention which began not long after his appointment to the post of American minister and continued through more than half of his term, as long, that is, as the period of acute disturbance of the relations between England and Ireland. Other international questions arose during his term of service, but none that called for the exercise of so much sound diplomatic discretion, or gave rise to so much angry criticism. Lowell's judgment regarding Irish affairs was not the result merely of what he now saw and heard in London. No American who had followed public questions at home could escape the formation of some opinion respecting the Irish character and the relation in which Ireland stood to England, and through her emigrants to America. In 1848, when Smith O'Brien, Meagher, and other Irish leaders were agitating for reform through insurrec-

tion, Lowell commented on the situation in one of his editorial articles in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. He had no faith in the measures which these leaders proposed; he thought the only radical cure for the evils of Ireland lay in peasant proprietorship and education. "The only permanent safeguard," he writes, "against famine is to give the people a deeper interest in the soil they cultivate and the crops they raise. It is the constant sense of insecurity that has made the Irish the shiftless and prodigal people which they are represented to be by all travellers. Education will be of no avail unless at the same time something be given them on which they can bring it to a practical bearing. Take away English opposition and the present insurrection is directed against — what? We confess ourselves at a loss for an answer. The only insurrection which has done Ireland any real service was the one headed by Father Mathew. The true office of the Irish Washington would be to head a rebellion against thriftlessness, superstition, and dirt. The sooner the barricades are thrown up against these the better. Ireland is in want of a revolution which shall render troops less necessary rather than more so."

When Lowell was earnestly opposing the suicidal course of the South before the actual outbreak of the war for the Union, secession being then the shibboleth, he took Scotland and Ireland in their relation to Great Britain for parallel historic instances in support of his position. "There is no

such antipathy," he wrote, "between the North and the South as men ambitious of a consideration in the new republic, which their talents and character have failed to secure them in the old, would fain call into existence by asserting that it exists. The misunderstanding and dislike between them is not so great as they were within living memory between England and Scotland, as they are now between England and Ireland. There is no difference of race, language, or religion. Yet, after a dissatisfaction of near a century and two rebellions, there is no part of the British dominion more loyal than Scotland, no British subjects who would be more loath to part with the substantial advantages of their imperial connection than the Scotch; and even in Ireland, after a longer and more deadly feud, there is no sane man who would consent to see his country irrevocably cut off from power and consideration to obtain an independence which would be nothing but Donnybrook Fair multiplied by every city, town, and village in the island. The same considerations of policy and advantage, which render the union of Scotland and Ireland with England a necessity, apply with even more force to the several States of our Union." [1]

When, therefore, Lowell found himself in England as the representative of the United States at a period when the chronic irritation between England and Ireland was at an acute stage through the operation of the so-called coercion act, it is not

[1] "E Pluribus Unum," *Political Essays*, pp. 67, 68. Printed first in the *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1861.

surprising that he should take a very lively interest in affairs. As a part of his diplomatic duty, he kept his government informed not so much of the facts which were the news of the day, as of the interpretation to be put upon the political situation. Accordingly, on 7 January, 1881, he wrote to Mr. Evarts, then Secretary of State: —

"Seldom has a session of Parliament begun under more critical circumstances. The abnormal condition of Ireland and the question of what remedy should be sought for it have deeply divided and embittered public opinion. Not only has the law been rendered powerless and order disturbed (both of them things almost superstitiously sacred in England), but the sensitive nerve of property has been rudely touched. The opposition have clamored for coercion, but while they have persisted in this it is clear that a change has been gradually going on in their opinion as to how great concessions would be needful. It seems now to be granted on all sides that the Irish people have wrongs to be redressed and just claims for rights to be granted. I think that the government have at least gained so much by the expectant and humane policy which they have persevered in under very great difficulties, and in spite of a criticism the more harassing as it seemed to have some foundation in principles hitherto supposed to be self-evident.

"Added to this was the fact (at least I believe it to be a fact) that there was a division of opinion in the Cabinet itself. This probably led to the

one mistake in policy that has been made by the prosecution of Mr. Parnell and some of his associates — a mistake, because, in the exceedingly improbable contingency of the jury agreeing to convict, the belief will be universal in Ireland that they have been packed, and the government will have a dozen martyrs on its hands of whom it would be at a loss how to dispose, — a half-ludicrous position which could not fail to involve a loss of prestige.

"There can be no doubt that Mr. Parnell was unpleasantly surprised by the land league, and has been compelled to identify himself with a movement having other and more comprehensive (perhaps more desperate) aims than that which he originated. So far as can be judged, a great deal of the agitation in Ireland is factitious, and large numbers of persons have been driven by timidity to profess a sympathy with it which they do not feel. This, of course, strengthens the probability of its being possible to allay it by generally acceptable measures of reform. I am sure that the reasonable leaders or representatives of Irish opinion see the folly of expecting that England would ever peaceably consent to the independence of Ireland; that they do not themselves desire it; and that they would be content with a thorough reform of the land laws and a certain amount of local self-government. Both of these measures, you will observe, are suggested in the speech from the throne. You will readily divine that one of the great difficulties with which the ministry has had to struggle

has been the presentiment that a change in the conditions of land tenure in Ireland will be followed by something similar, certainly by an agitation for something similar, on this side the Irish channel.

"The Cabinet, I am safe in saying, are earnestly desirous of doing justice to Ireland, and not only that, but of so shaping reform as to make the cure as lasting as such a cure can be. No government can consent to revolution (though this was deemed possible in some quarters as respects some governments twenty years ago), but the present ministry are willing to go all lengths that are feasible and wise in the way of reform and reparation. Their greatest obstacle will be the overweening expectations and inconsiderate temper of the Irish themselves, both of them the result of artificial rather than natural causes. For no reform will be effectual that does not gradually nullify the unhappy effects produced by the influence, through many generations, of the pitiable travesty of feudal relations between landlord and tenant, making that relation personal instead of mercantile, and thus insensibly debauching both.

"The condition of Ireland is not so disturbed now as it has been at several periods during the last eighty years, and precisely the same system of organization was brought to bear against the collection of tithes fifty years ago that has now been revived to resist the payment of what are considered excessive rents. The landlords are represented as the minions of a foreign and hated domi-

nation, and the use of the epithet *foreign* has at least this justification, that there is certainly an imperfect sympathy between the English and Irish characters which prevents each from comprehending either the better qualities of the other or, what is worse, the manner of their manifestion.

"I cannot perceive that the public opinion of the country has withdrawn itself in any appreciable measure from sympathy with the Cabinet, though there is considerable regret among thoughtful liberals that coercion should have been deemed necessary and that the proposed reforms should not have gone farther. If the Irish could only be brought to have as much faith in Mr. Gladstone as he has desire for their welfare, there might be more hope than I can now see for a permanent solution of the Irish question."

Mr. Evarts acknowledged the despatch with commendation for its lucid treatment of the subject, but Lowell soon found himself involved in something closer at hand than academic discussion. About three weeks after this despatch, he had occasion to write again of the state of affairs, and to note the final passage of the so-called coercion bill. At the close of this despatch he wrote: "The wild and whirling words of some Irishmen and others from America have done harm to something more than the cause of Irish peasantry, by becoming associated in the public mind with the country whose citizenship they put off or put on as may be most convenient. In connection with this, I beg leave to call your attention to an extraordinary

passage in the letter of Mr. Parnell to the Irish National Land League, dated Paris, February 13, 1881, in which he makes a distinction between 'the American people' and 'the Irish nation in America.' This double nationality is likely to be of great practical inconvenience whenever the coercion bill becomes law. The same actor takes alternately the characters of a pair of twins who are never on the stage simultaneously." [1]

In his capacity of critic, Lowell heartily condemned the measure taken by the British government. In a letter to the American consul in Cork, he wrote: "The 'coercion act,' so-called, is an exceptional and arbitrary measure. Its chief object is to enable the authorities to arrest persons whom they suspect of illegal conduct, without being obliged to produce any proof of their guilt. Its very substance and main purpose are to deprive suspected persons of the speedy trial they desire. This law is, of course, contrary to the spirit and foundation principles of both English and American jurisprudence; but it is the law of the land and it controls all parties domiciled in the proclaimed districts of Ireland, whether they are British subjects or not, and it is manifestly entirely futile to claim that naturalized citizens of the United States should be excepted from its operation." [2]

But Lowell was not a mere looker-on in London, He was charged with the very delicate duty of dis-

[1] Despatch No. 132, dated 26 February, 1881.
[2] *Foreign Relations*, 1881, p. 545.

criminating between men who were American citizens and innocent of any infraction of British laws and men who used the cloak of naturalization, whether genuine or pretended, to cover illicit actions and designs. He had to uphold the real dignity of the American citizen, and at the same time to avoid entangling his country and Great Britain by an unwary protection of some one who had no title to protection. The cases which now began to succeed each other with confusing rapidity involved not only a mass of correspondence and the sifting of evidence, but the application constantly of personal judgment, and the exercise of much ingenuity in the reading of character. An illustration may be found in a despatch of Lowell to his government, dated 4 June, 1881. After an analysis of the political situation, he says: —

"I think that the necessity of a radical and prompt reform in the relations of landlord and tenant in Ireland is forcing conviction into the mind of even the Conservative Party, though the violence of language and the incitement to violence of action on the part of those who claim to be the true friends of Ireland are doing much to endanger the success of remedial measures.

"Among the most violent are often the Irishmen who have been naturalized in America, and then gone back to Ireland with the hope, and sometimes, I am justified in saying, with the deliberate intention, of disturbing the friendly relations between the United States and England. Such a one called upon me the other day. His

name was ——, naturalized in 1875 at Baltimore, and going over to Ireland immediately after on the plea that his health could not resist the American climate. He is now at least a remarkably robust and florid man. He told me that he was a draper in Charleville, County Cork, and hearing that a warrant was out for his arrest, he had come over to London to claim my protection. He had been acting as treasurer of the Land League in that place. He professed not to know on what grounds the warrant had been issued, but I satisfied myself in the course of our conversation that he knew perfectly well it was for seditious language and incitement to violence. He favored me with a good deal of this sort of rhetoric with a manner that implied no earnestness of conviction, and as if repeating something he had learned by rote. He several times repeated that the 'best thing would be a war between England and the United States.' After hearing this man's talk, my belief was that he had purposely exposed himself to the chances of arrest in the hope of adding to the difficulties of the government. I asked him if he had considered the enormous interests at stake, quite apart from any moral consideration, and that England was our greatest customer for cattle, corn, and cotton? He merely repeated what he had said before as to the desirability of war. —— declared that he meant to return to America whenever his health would permit, but admitted that it would take at least five years to wind up his business, and I think his

intention may fairly be questioned. As he declared himself ready to be quiet for the future if not arrested, I thought it prudent to mention his name unofficially to Lord Granville, and to suggest that the warrant should not be put in force unless further offence were given.

"I have spoken at some length of his case, because I think it of some importance that the Department should be informed as to the kind of persons who may ask its intervention, and as to the doctrines they preach. Under ordinary circumstances they would be harmless, and are made mischievous only by the excited state of the country. My own judgment is that the ministry have gone to the extreme limit of public opinion in their concessions to Irish necessities; that they are perfectly honest in their desire to be generously just; and that the best friends of Ireland are not those who, however sincerely, throw obstacles in their way. The real cure, which I believe to be a larger measure of Home Rule, will be made easier by the better state of things which, in the opinion of those best competent to judge, is likely to result from the passage of the Land Bill."

In the early stages of what proved to be a long and vexatious series of Irish-American cases, Lowell laid down a course of action which he seems to have adhered to consistently. The United States consul at Dublin had on his hands a case which was especially troublesome, because the claim of the arrested man to American protection rested on statements of citizenship which were contradictory,

and created naturally a suspicion as to the validity of the claim. After cautioning the consul to make certain enquiries, he adds: "If the fact of his American citizenship should thus be ascertained to your satisfaction, I desire then that you should carefully examine into the grounds of his arrest, and if the precise facts justify the belief that no substantial charge of his complicity with treasonable or seditious objects can be made out, you will communicate this to the authorities in Ireland and request his discharge or to be informed why he is detained. You will please intimate, in respectful terms and without any warmth or suggestion of threats, that you are making these enquiries under my instructions, and are acting precisely as British consuls in the United States acted soon after the civil war, under the directions of the British minister at Washington, in cases of summary arrests of British subjects. It is my duty to protect, so far as I can, all citizens of the United States, whether native or naturalized, who are shown to be innocent of designs to subvert civil order, and I should not perhaps require in such cases evidence of innocence so full and conclusive as that which might be required in a court of law. At the same time I shall by no means try to screen any persons who are evidently guilty of offending against the criminal laws of Great Britain."

Mr. Blaine, who had succeeded Mr. Evarts as Secretary of State, on being advised of Lowell's action in this case, wrote that it received "the entire commendation of the Department as discreet

and proper." And a few weeks later, as the case became somewhat more involved, he wrote again: "The prudence you have shown in dealing with ——'s claim to citizenship is commendable, and the statements as to the law in his case, made in your letters to him, are in full accord with the interpretation of this Department." Mr. Blaine then laid down instructions to meet certain hypothetical cases, and not long after had occasion to call Lowell's attention to another apparent act of injustice in the arrest of a naturalized American citizen. The friends of the man in America had besieged Mr. Blaine in his behalf, and Mr. Blaine wrote an eloquent despatch to Lowell, in which he said: "If American citizens while within British jurisdiction offend against British laws, this government will not seek to shield them from the legal consequences of their acts, but it must insist upon the application to their cases of those common principles of criminal jurisprudence which in the United States secure to every man who offends against its laws, whether he be an American citizen or a foreign subject, those incidents to a criminal prosecution which afford the best safeguard to personal liberty and the strongest protection against oppression under the forms of law, which might otherwise be practised through excessive zeal."

Lowell replied somewhat dryly: "It will give me great pleasure to communicate to Lord Granville the views you have so clearly and eloquently expressed as to the injustice of some of the fea-

tures of the so-called 'Protection act,'[1] and especially its retroactive character. But I would respectfully suggest whether any step would be gained toward the speedy trial or release of —— by an argument against the law itself under which he was apprehended. So long as Lord Granville expressly declines to make any distinction between British subjects and American citizens in the application of this law, a position which I presume may be justified by precedents in our own diplomatic history, I submit to your better judgment whether the only arguments I can use in favor of —— must not be founded upon some exceptional injustice in the way in which he has been treated. If this shall appear by the report of the consul to have been practised, I shall press for his trial or release with great earnestness. But if it shall be shown that he has experienced no more harshness than the majority of his fellow-prisoners have suffered, I do not feel by any means sure that your instructions would authorize me to make any special application on his behalf." Lowell finally secured the release of the man by pointing out that his health was suffering by his imprisonment, and it is not unlikely that Lord Granville was glad of so good an excuse to remove one of the perplexities by which his government was embarrassed.

The whole unhappy business may be said to have been at its height when, in February, 1882,

[1] The title of the act, called sometimes the "coercion" sometimes the "protection" act, was "An act for the better protection of person and property in Ireland."

a resolution of the House of Representatives called upon the President for detailed information respecting the arrest of American citizens in Ireland. The State Department accordingly called on the American minister in London to furnish this information, and in his despatch dated 14 March, 1882, Lowell recounts all the cases which up to that time had come under his notice, with all the correspondence relating thereto. There were ten, and the number was increased by a few more before the business was settled. At the close of the despatch, enumerating the ten cases, Lowell says very pertinently : —

"I may be permitted to add that I have had repeated assurances from the highest authority that there would be great reluctance in arresting a naturalized citizen of the United States were he known to be such. But it is seldom known, and those already arrested have acted in all respects as if they were Irishmen, sometimes engaged in trade, sometimes in farming, and sometimes filling positions in the local government. This I think is illustrated by a phrase in one of Mr. ——'s letters, to the effect that he never called himself an American. He endeavors, it is true, in a subsequent letter, to explain this away as meaning *American born ;* but it is obviously absurd that a man living in his native village should need to make any such explanation. Naturalized Irishmen seem entirely to misconceive the process through which they have passed in assuming American citizenship, looking upon themselves as Irishmen who have acquired

a right to American protection, rather than as Americans who have renounced a claim to Irish nationality."

It is not surprising that the whole affair caused much fury of words both in Congress and out. An organization existed which was bent on making all the trouble it could for the British government, and there was still plenty of political capital in Irish wrongs. A great mass-meeting was held in New York at which Lowell was denounced severely, and from this time till his return from England every opportunity was taken by a certain class of men to sneer at him for what they were pleased to regard as his apostasy from American principles. He was defended, however, both in Congress and in the press. His course was well summed up in an editorial article, in which the writer says: —

"Mr. Lowell, who has been denounced by Mr. Randall for his 'sickening sycophancy to English influence,' has treated the matter not as an English, Irish, or American question, but purely as a point of international law. He has had no sympathy with the coercion legislation, and has even taken pains to characterize it as exceptional and arbitrary. . . . That law [the 'protection' law] legalized the arrest of the suspects in districts where the writ of *habeas corpus* had been suspended, and where the natives were not allowed the privilege of a jury trial. To have demanded their unconditional release, when no discrimination had been made between them and the natives, would

have been an open affront to a friendly power. What Mr. Lowell did was to follow the best precedents of criminal jurisdiction in international cases, several of which had been established during the American civil war, when British subjects were arbitrarily arrested and denied the privilege of trial. At the same time, he has conducted the negotiations with the Foreign Office with so much tact and decision that we are inclined to expect a speedy clearance of the Irish jails from suspects whose citizenship in the United States is authenticated." And the next day the same journal said: "Mr. Lowell's negotiations for the release of the Irish-American suspects have been crowned with partial success. Before the mass-meeting at Cooper Institute disgraced itself by heaping reproaches upon him, the Department of State had received official information that all but three of these prisoners had been set at liberty in response to the request of the United States minister. . . . Mr. Frelinghuysen[1] reports that the negotiations have been carried on between the two governments for some time 'in a spirit of entire friendship.' This result had been promoted by the cordial relations existing between Lord Granville and Mr. Lowell. The fact that our government has been represented in these negotiations by one of our foremost men of letters has been a most fortunate circumstance. Mr. Lowell had won the respect and admiration of the best men in English public life, and when he

[1] Mr. Frelinghuysen had succeeded Mr. Blaine as Secretary of State.

came to plead for these suspects his personal character and popularity were of direct service to them. . . . Mr. Lowell made, as our cable despatches have stated, every effort consistent with diplomatic usage, and at the same time performed a most delicate duty with such consummate tact as to remove all sources of irritation." [1]

The whole situation was plainly one that called for great tact, and for that delicate use of language in which the shadows of words are not to be left out of account. It was probably with reference to this particular encounter that the London *Spectator* said shortly after Lowell's death: "There was a question at one time whether the late Lord Granville or Mr. Lowell were the more accomplished and subtle in conveying, without offence, the suggestion or conviction which it might be the duty of either of them to impress on any one to whom the communication might not be welcome. And probably this is a point which would be very differently determined by different people. But though equal in courtesy and grace of manner to Lord Granville, we should say that Mr. Lowell had the greater power of the two to impress his meaning, even where it was a meaning painful and difficult to enforce, without conveying even the slightest tincture of personal discourtesy. Lord Granville was perhaps even fuller of the *suaviter in modo*, but Mr. Lowell never forgot the necessity, where the necessity existed, of conveying also the impression of the *fortiter in re.* With all his

[1] *The New York Tribune*, 5, 6 April, 1882.

grace, there was a plainness of purpose in him which could not be mistaken."[1]

Lowell himself, writing to Dr. Holmes shortly before leaving England, recalls the situation and says: "Some of my Irishmen had been living in their old homes seventeen years, engaged in trade or editing nationalist papers, or members of the poor-law guardians (like MacSweeney), and neither paying taxes in America nor doing any other duty as Americans. I was guided by two things — the recognized principles of international law, and the conduct of Lord Lyons when Seward was arresting and imprisoning British subjects. We kept one man in jail seven months without trial or legal process of any kind, and, but for the considerateness and moderation of Lyons, might have had war with England. I think I saved a misunderstanding here. . . . When I had at last procured the conditional (really unconditional) release of all the suspects, they refused to be liberated. When I spoke of this to Justin McCarthy (then the head of the Irish Parliamentary party, Parnell being in Kilmainham), he answered cheerfully, 'Certainly: *they are there to make trouble.*'"[2] One of the intimations of what lay in his mind throughout all the delicate business may be read in a note to Mr. John W. Field, 19 January, 1884: "I wonder, by the way, when we shall see an American politician able to appreciate and shrewd enough to act on Curran's saying about his countrymen, that 'an

[1] *The Spectator*, 15 August, 1891.
[2] *Letters*, ii. 293, 294.

Irishman is the worst fellow in the world to run away from.'"

And after his return to America, he wrote to Lady Lyttelton: "You must make up your mind to let Ireland have her head. She may no doubt choose to go over a precipice, though I don't think that she would, and at any rate a whole legion of devils would go with her as with the Gadarene swine; at best it is all up playing Sisera, for the stars in their courses are rather beyond reach even of the newspapers." That Lowell had a keen appreciation of the genuine spirit of patriotism which moved the Irish in America in his generation may be discerned by any one who will read the closing sentences in his address on "The Independent in Politics."

Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton in an article[1] published just after Lowell's death, tried to sum up his intellectual qualities in a word, and thought he found the expression in "sagacity." "In life," he says, "his most striking characteristic — a characteristic indicated not only by the watchful gray eyes and the apparently conscious eyebrows that overshadowed them, but in every intonation of his voice, and every movement of his limbs — was a marvellous sagacity." "What is called his wit," he adds, "is merely this almost preternatural sagacity in rapid movement. What is called his humor is this same sagacity at rest and in a meditative mood." Without pushing this analysis so far, there is no doubt that in his diplomatic

[1] *The Athenæum*, 22 August, 1891.

capacity Lowell did draw upon his native genius for quick perception and interpretation. The gift which he had multiplied by use in the criticism of literature and in the diagnosis of political situations at home, was at his service both in Madrid and London. It made him not a mere fencer in a diplomatic game, but a man of resources in the serious representation of his country's interests. That he could couch his demands or protests in witty phrase added to his power of persuasion; and he could not associate as an equal with English statesmen without applying his sagacity to their problems even where these did not immediately concern his own people. Perhaps it was after Majuba that he wrote in one of his despatches: "I asked Lord Lyons whether he did not think suzerainty might be defined as 'leaving to a man the privilege of carrying the saddle and bridle after you have stolen his horse.' He assented."

There was, perhaps, something in the adjustment of Lowell to his surroundings which set the springs of poetry flowing intermittently. At any rate, he was content, conscious that he was of service in a high position, happy both in his own health — "I have never seen a climate that suited me so well," he wrote — and in his wife's improvement, and surrounded by congenial companions. These things do not necessarily make for poetry, but Lowell had by this time come into that mellow stage when what he did had about it an absence of apparent effort, when his ripe experience

and equipoise of life found easy expression, and poetry was a solace and a pastime. To be sure, there is something to make one smile behind his hand when one sees the American minister sending his "Phœbe" across the Atlantic and following it with almost daily corrections, yet one listens to the note with the feeling that the poet is putting into the reminiscence of a far-off sound not a little of his present apprehension of himself. Nay, the poem in its first form broke at last into two stanzas, wisely omitted in the final recension, which are almost bald in their apologetic confession: —

> "Let who has felt compute the strain
> Of struggle with abuses strong,
> The doubtful course, the helpless pain
> Of seeing best intents go wrong.
>
> "We who look on with critic eyes
> Exempt from action's crucial test,
> Human ourselves, at least are wise
> In honoring one who did his best."

On New Year's Day, 1882, Lowell sent another poem, "Estrangement," to Mr. Gilder for the *Century*. "I am pleased," he wrote, "that you liked the little poem I sent you, and the more that you asked for another. Here is one you are welcome to, if you like it. I rather do, but that is nothing, and I shall like you none the less if you don't. Treat me like a gentleman and not like a poet, — I mean as you would a gentleman and not a poet. I am tough and have myself played Herod to many an infant muse, — and mine is approaching her second childhood."

His social life drew from him occasional verses, as when he planted a tree at Inverary, or thanked Miss Dorothy Tennant, who afterward married Henry M. Stanley, for a drawing of little street Arabs, or sent a sonnet home in honor of Whittier's seventy-fifth birthday, or gave a posset cup to a god-child. He was happy in pleasing young friends with verses, sometimes inserting them in books which he gave them, or writing them in their albums.

Early in 1882 he was saddened by the sudden death of R. H. Dana, one of the earliest of his friends and lately fresh in his recollection since he had seen much of him in his recent stay in Rome. "We had known each other," he wrote to Mr. George Putnam, "at least fifty-five years. He is a great loss, and the more that his career was incomplete. He never filled the place he ought in public affairs. One weakness neutralized the legitimate effect of his very remarkable abilities. Death seems to be hitting right and left among my contemporaries. So far as I am concerned, I take the warning with perfect equanimity." It was somewhat in the same mood that he wrote to his friend Field: "I have no news except that for about a week I have been *having a head* again. I have temporarily reformed and live cleanly like Falstaff. No wine, no black coffee, and — you won't believe it, but 't is true — no baccy till afternoon and then a short allowance. You see I am in earnest. At the same time that I take these precautions I confess that I don't *hanker arter*

much more of this world, and should n't mind much if —. I notice that the men in my platoon are dropping right and left. I wish I relished life as much as you. Give my love to ——, who will see by the way I spell her name that I am in good humor though I feel as if I had Luke's iron crown on."

He was drawn in colored chalks at this time by Mr. Sandys, and another portrait also was painted by Mrs. Merritt, which now hangs in the Faculty Room in University Hall at Harvard. "I am off for private view at Academy," he writes to Mr. Field, 28 April, 1882; "two portraits of myself there. They are very unlike each other, and my duty to the artist requires me to try and look as much like each as I can. What am I to do? They will be in different rooms doubtless, and so I can manage it perhaps."

It was a light matter to toy with verse now and then, but as for prose, the most he attempted beyond his despatches to his government were the speeches he made now and then. Mr. Aldrich had asked for a paper on a certain subject for the *Atlantic*, and he replied, 8 May, 1882: "If I could, how gladly I would! But I am piecemealed here with so many things to do that I cannot get a moment to brood over anything, as it must be brooded over if it is to have wings. It is as if a setting hen should have to mind the doorbell. Now, you must wait till I come home to be Boycotted in my birthplace by my Irish fellow-citizens (who are kind enough to teach me how to

be American) who fought all our battles and got up all our draft-riots. Then, in the intervals of firing through my loopholes of retreat I may be able to do something for the *Atlantic*. I am now in the midst of the highly important and engrossing business of arranging for the presentation at Court of some of our fair citoyennes. Whatever else you are, never be a minister!" Mr. Bowker relates of Lowell that "at one time he had given offence to an American lady of doubtful reputation, who had asked him to present her at Court, and on his dexterously evading that responsibility, had asked him point blank whether he was unwilling because he had heard certain things about her. He could not answer in the negative, and she went off vowing vengeance. A few months afterwards, when the Irish criticisms were hottest, she reappeared and had the effrontery to tell him that she had stirred up the whole business herself, out of revenge. Mr. Lowell added, on telling this story, that he proposed to accomplish at least one thing, to keep his country respectable, even if he had to resign to do it."

One of the most admirable of his little speeches was that on unveiling the bust of Fielding at Taunton, 4 September, 1883. He spoke as an author, as one who had reflected upon the great office of literature, and as a critic who could measure Fielding's power by the standard of Shakespeare and Cervantes, and perhaps even more effectively as one of the English race who was enough differentiated by his American birth, and enough in-

structed by his familiarity with racy men of the soil, to appreciate the essential English manliness of the great writer. This address is indeed one of the most striking commentaries on the fitness of Lowell to act as a spokesman for the common Englishry of two countries. His point of view was at once that of an onlooker and of one indigenous. Three years later, when reprinting the address in his volume "Democracy and other Addresses," he refers to one passage in the speech as follows: "I am constantly bothered by the disenchanting effect of my sense of humor (of which I speak in the Fielding address) which makes me too fair to both sides. This often makes me distrustful of myself. I am sometimes inclined to call Genius not 'an infinite capacity for taking pains' (though that is much), but an infinite capacity for being one-sided."

There was a somewhat humorous episode in Lowell's career in the autumn of 1883. It is a time-honored custom at the ancient and sturdy little University of St. Andrews for the student body to elect once a year a Lord Rector of the University whose duties are limited to a single address. There is a tacit understanding that politics shall not enter into the election, and that the choice shall be the students' own, without interference from the officers of the faculty. This does not of course preclude an interest on the part of professors, and Shairp, Campbell, and Baynes especially took a lively interest in the proposal that Lowell should succeed Sir Theodore Martin. At first Mr. Mal-

lock appeared as opposition candidate, but his name was withdrawn when it was found that he had been set up by some indiscreet person with a view to bettering his chances for Parliament, and the Right Hon. Edward Gibson was proposed. A protest was lodged against Lowell's nomination on the ground that he was an alien. The whole business created a lively discussion in and out of print, and *Punch* entered the lists with these lines: —

"An alien? Go to! If fresh, genial wit
In sound Saxon speech be not genuine grit,
If the wisdom and mirth he has put into verse for us
Don't make him a 'native,' why, so much the worse for us.
Whig, Tory, and Rad should club votes, did he need 'em,
To honor the writer who gave *Bird o' Freedom*
To all English readers. A few miles of sea
Make Lowell an alien? Fiddle-de-dee!
'T is crass party spirit, Bœotian, dense,
That is alien indeed — to good taste and good sense."

The excitement ran high, and Lowell was elected by a considerable majority. But his opponents pushed the matter further, and demonstrated that he was really ineligible by reason of his "extra-territoriality." As Lowell put it in writing to Professor Child: "My official extra-territoriality will, perhaps, prevent my being rector at St. Andrews, because it puts me beyond the reach of the Scottish Courts in case of malversation in office. How to rob a Scottish University suggests a serious problem." To avoid further complications Lowell resigned. He good-humoredly told his friends at home that his only regret was in being prevented from adding the dignified line "Univ.

Sanct. Andr-Scot-Dom. Rect." to his name in the Harvard catalogue. His student friends could do nothing but accept the situation. Later, they begged him, when they knew he was to be at St. Andrews, to address them unofficially. It was not long before the expiration of his term as American minister, and he wrote, 27 January, 1885 : —

"Circumstances over which I have no control will prevent my being with you at St. Andrews next Friday. I feel deeply touched by the continued kindness of the students of your ancient University, and greatly honored by their wish to see me and hear me. I am somewhat consoled in my disappointment by the reflection that neither your eyes nor your ears will lose so much as is kindly implied by the invitation with which you have honored me. It is I who miss a pleasure whose loss I shall always regret; for young friends have a charm and value of their own, as he feels most sensibly who has reached a period in life when old ones are only too frequently saying good-by forever."

When the commotion over the rectorship was going on, Lowell was having a holiday in Paris, where he was able to take Mrs. Lowell for a couple of months. An anonymous writer in the *Atlantic Monthly*,[1] who saw the Lowells at this time, has recorded some impressions created by Lowell's conversation, and among them one respecting his interest in the Jewish race. When he was writing his paper on Rousseau, his interest was awakened,

[1] January, 1897. "Conversations with Mr. Lowell."

and the interest took a personal turn as he associated his own family name of Russell with that of the French philosopher. He was led to enquire into the representation of the race in America, and no doubt his interest was heightened by his sojourn in Spain. But it was after he went to England, where he had manifold opportunities for making observations, that the whole subject of the Jewish element in society came to be a very frequent topic of conversation with him. It was just such a subject as would appeal to his love of paradox, his subtle curiosity, and his liking for brilliant forays into new territory. It does not appear that Lowell ever set down in writing his deliberate convictions. Rather he kept this theme for the pastime of conversation, driving the ball indeed at times with an energy which would suggest the professional athlete.

"One evening," says the writer in the *Atlantic*, "I was dining with Mr. and Mrs. Lowell and three other friends, and he began to lament the renaming of old streets which was going on, and the obliteration of the last traces of the Paris of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, — the Paris of the schoolmen and their open-air debates. He spoke of the local history that lay in the mere names of streets and squares, — Rue du Fouarre, Rue des Gauvais Garçons, and several more of which he gave the origin and legend. In the midst of this picturesque and learned disquisition he stumbled upon the class of a celebrated philosopher of those times, seated on their bundles of straw, —

a well-known teacher whose name I cannot now recall, — and stated that he was a Jew.

"He instantly began to talk of the Jews, a subject which turned out to be almost a monomania with him. He detected a Jew in every hiding-place and under every disguise, even when the fugitive had no suspicion of himself. To begin with nomenclature: all persons named for countries or towns are Jews; all with fantastic, compound names, such as Lilienthal, Morgenroth; all with names derived from colors, trades, animals, vegetables, minerals; all with Biblical names, except Puritan first names; all patronymics ending in *son*, — *sohn*, *sen*, or any other version; all Russels, originally so called from red-haired Israelites; all Walters, by long descended derivation from wolves and foxes in some ancient tongue; the Cæcilii, therefore Cecilia Metella, no doubt St. Cecilia too, consequently the Cecils, including Lord Burleigh and Lord Salisbury; he cited some old chronicle in which he had cornered one Robert de Cæcilia and exposed him as an English Jew. He gave examples and instances of these various classes with amazing readiness and precision, but I will not pretend that I have set down even these few correctly. Of course there was Jewish blood in many royal houses and in most noble ones, notably in Spain. In short, it appeared that this insidious race had penetrated and permeated the human family more universally than any other influence except original sin. He spoke of their talent and versatility, and of the numbers who had been illus-

trious in literature, the learned professions, art, science, and even war, until by degrees, from being shut out of society and every honorable and desirable pursuit, they had gained the prominent positions everywhere.

"Then he began his classifications again: all bankers were Jews, likewise brokers, most of the great financiers, — and that was to be expected; the majority of barons, also baronets; they had got possession of the press, they were getting into politics; they had forced their entrance into the army and navy; they had made their way into the cabinets of Europe and become prime ministers; they had slipped into diplomacy and become ambassadors. But a short time ago they were packed into the Ghetto: now they inhabited palaces, the most aristocratic quarters, and were members of the most exclusive clubs. A few years ago they could not own land; they were acquiring it by purchase and mortgage in every part of Europe, and buying so many old estates in England that they owned the larger part of several counties.

"Mr. Lowell said more, much more, to illustrate the ubiquity, the universal ability of the Hebrew, and gave examples and statistics for every statement, however astonishing, drawn from his inexhaustible information. He was conscious of the sort of infatuation which possessed him, and his dissertation alternated between earnestness and drollery; but whenever a burst of laughter greeted some new development of his theme, although he joined in it, he immediately returned to the charge

with abundant proof of his paradoxes. Finally he came to a stop, but not to a conclusion, and as no one else spoke, I said, 'And when the Jews have got absolute control of finance, the army and navy, the press, diplomacy, society, titles, the government, and the earth's surface, what do you suppose they will do with them and with us?' 'That,' he answered, turning towards me, and in a whisper audible to the whole table, 'that is the question which will eventually drive me mad.'"

On the return of the Lowells from Paris to London they moved into a larger and more commodious house still in Lowndes Square, but No. 31. "We have been having a mild winter," Lowell writes to Mr. Field, 19 January, 1884, "with only a couple of days or so of frost thus far. Everything is looking as green as summer (by everything I mean the grass in the Parks) and the thrushes are using up all their best songs before the curtain of spring rises. The Season has n't begun yet, but I am dining out more or less as usual. Fanny goes too sometimes, but can't stand much of it. You will have seen that I have resigned my rectorship, but I was at once chosen president of the Birmingham and Midland Institute so that I might have another chair to sit down in."

It was in the double office of American minister and poet that he took part in the ceremonies attending the unveiling of the bust of Longfellow in Westminster Abbey, 2 March, 1884. But the personal relation which he bore the poet was upper-

most in his mind, especially as he was renewing his intercourse with the family in the person of two of Longfellow's daughters who were living in England at this time and were present at the unveiling. The occasion was not one for critical judgment, but in the course of his brief speech he made a felicitous point on sonnet writing. "I have been struck particularly," he said, "with this quality of style in some of my late friend's sonnets, which seem to me in unity and evenness of flow among the most beautiful and perfect we have in the language. They remind one of those cabinets in which all the drawers are opened at once by the turn of the key in a single lock, whereas we all have seen sonnets with a lock in every line with a different key to each, and the added conundrums of secret drawers."

In April came the tercentenary commemoration of the University of Edinburgh, when Lowell was present and received the degree of Doctor of Laws. The same degree was conferred on him at his own University a few weeks later.

In May he was called on for two addresses. On the seventh of the month he attended the annual dinner of the Provincial Newspaper Society at the Inns of Court Hotel, London, and a few words which he then said, because spoken apparently without premeditation, are worth recording as expressing a judgment held by him with great sincerity. "I have my own theory," he said, "as to what after-dinner speaking should be. I think it should be in the first place short; I think it should

be light; and I think it should be both extemporaneous and contemporaneous. I think it should have the meaning of the moment in it, and nothing more. But I confess that when I get up here and face you, representing what you call the Provincial Press — and if you will allow me by way of an interjection, I may state that it has been my fortune to live in a number of countries, where it has sometimes been my duty to study the National Press, and I have always and everywhere found it provincial: I have never yet encountered a truly cosmopolitan newspaper — when I feel myself standing for the first time in the presence of a collection of editors, I experience a very serious emotion. I feel as if I were talking to the ear of Dionysius, at the other end of which the world was listening. I do not see any reporters here — I am glad I do not. I cannot help taking this opportunity, with so many persons who have the formation of public opinion before me, of saying one or two words on the growing change which has taken place in the methods of forming public opinion. I am not sure that you are always aware to how great an extent you have supplanted the pulpit, to how great an extent you have supplanted even the deliberative assembly. You have assumed responsibilities, I should say, heavier than man ever assumed before. You wield an influence entirely without precedent hitherto in human history. I do not wish the dinner to be too solemn, but, as I tell you, I have been solemnized standing in this presence. I came here intending only to say a few words of kindly thanks for the

friendliness which you have shown toward the country I have the honor to represent, and to me as representing it. But, I cannot forbear to say that, if I were an editor, I should have written up in the room in which I write, 'Woe to me if I preach not the gospel:' I mean so much of the Word of God as is manifest to me, and I should strive to preach that word, and to convey it to my fellow-men. I have always thought the case of clergymen a hard one, because they are expected to be inspired once a week. But what is this to yours who must be inspired every day, and who have undertaken to edit the whole world every morning? There has been nothing, as I was just saying, that has, in the history of man, occupied such a position as the Press. You have the formation of public opinion. There is not a man here who values any more than I do, or ever have done, the opinion of Tom, or the opinion of Dick, or the opinion of Harry. But when Tom, Dick, and Harry agree, then we begin to call it public opinion. I am not sure that it always deserves that name; but I am sure of this, that public opinion is of value in precise proportion to the material it is made of. I am sure of this, that two factors go towards the making of that material. One is the editor, and the other is the reader."

Three days later, 10 May, 1884, he delivered, as president of the Wordsworth Society, the address on that poet which is included in his "Literary and Political Addresses." He deprecated the notion that he could add materially to what he had

written of Wordsworth in his more deliberate earlier paper,[1] for as he says: "Without unbroken time there can be no consecutive thought, and it is my misfortune that in the midst of a reflection or of a sentence I am liable to be called away by the bell of private or public duty." The speech contains one or two critical passages which may be added to the sum of Lowell's comment on Wordsworth; but to the student of Lowell's mind as affected by new conditions and registering itself in new terms, the speech is more interesting because of the main thought in it, that which occupies him upon passing in review the work of Dr. Knight who had by his new edition of the poet enabled the student to perceive more clearly the development of Wordsworth's thought. Precisely that examination which we are desirous of making of Lowell, Lowell set out to make of Wordsworth; but the eye of the student reveals something of the mind that prompts the eye's excursion, and Lowell was in a way suggesting the movement of his own thought when, upon enquiring what was the solution by which Wordsworth attempted as he grew in years to justify his own early radicalism with his later conservatism, he found a very powerful influence in that religious conception which dominated Wordsworth's later thought. "I see no reason to think," he says, "that he ever swerved from his early faith in the beneficence of freedom, but rather that he learned the necessity of defining more exactly in what freedom consisted, and the

[1] *Literary Essays*, iv.

conditions, whether of time or place, under which alone it can be beneficent, of insisting that it must be an evolution and not a manufacture, and that it should coördinate itself with the prior claims of society and civilization." But the roots of freedom were planted in the individual nature, and there they were to be nourished. Development of character — yes, but by what means? "Observation convinced him that what are called the safeguards of society are the staff also of the individual members of it; that tradition, habitude, and heredity are great forces, whether for impulse or restraint. He had pondered a pregnant phrase of the poet Daniel, where he calls religion 'mother of Form and Fear.' A growing conviction of its profound truth turned his mind towards the church as the embodiment of the most potent of all traditions, and to her public offices as the expression of the most socially humanizing of all habitudes."

Lowell was analyzing Wordsworth's poetry with a view to reaching definite understanding of the principles which prompted it, and especially which led to the gradual yet none the less sure change in the philosophy of the poetry. I think in the whole interesting discussion which Lowell here entered upon one may read his own mind, more or less conscious of change in its attitude and finding in the mirror of another poet some image of itself. In becoming wonted to English life, Lowell was lessening a certain protest against institutional religion which was characteristic of the community into which he was born, and had been a part of his

own intellectual and moral expression. In a letter to Mrs. Herrick written in 1875, he had answered a question of hers regarding his religious faith: —

"You ask me if I am an Episcopalian. No, though I prefer the service of the Church of England, and attend it from time to time. But I am not much of a church-goer, because I so seldom find any preaching that does not make me impatient and do me more harm than good. I confess to a strong lurch towards Calvinism (in some of its doctrines) that strengthens as I grow older. Perhaps it may be some consolation to you that my mother was born and bred an Episcopalian."

In this passage Lowell betrays very naturally his New England mind. He inherited the prevailing notion that the Episcopal Church was an exotic, — he speaks of attending the service of the Church of England, when he probably is thinking of his occasional visits with his daughter to Christ Church in his own Cambridge; and he could not help looking upon the sermon as the central point in religious worship. But the preference which he had for the service was easily strengthened by association with it where it was the rule and not the exception; not only so, but that observation which he used so keenly showed him in England the existence of a highly organized society, very congenial to him, in which not only was church-going a matter of course, but religion as a spirit was not dissociated from the forms of worship, rather it was thought of largely in those terms. Hence it was that Lowell in adjusting himself as he did to

the life about him was undergoing more or less conscious a change in the attitude of his mind toward the whole field of religion.

To some this would seem an indication that Lowell was becoming Anglicized. But how confidently could this be asserted of his political faith? That was a very integral part of his nature. From youth to age he had declared and reiterated his faith in freedom, in the largest liberty, and especially in that political equality which was the basis of all that was holiest and most enduring in the America of which he was so passionate a lover, — the America which he saw in a vision, and was able to see even through the vapors which might rise from mephitic ground. When the autumn of 1884 came, the political signs pointed to a change of party in the administration of government at home, and in the event of an accession to power of the Democratic party, it was plain that Lowell would be recalled from his post as minister near the Court of St. James. Four years of friendly intercourse with Englishmen and Englishwomen, of a somewhat more intimate acquaintance with the springs of government than falls to the lot of the mere looker-on; not only that, but the advantage which an alienated American has of viewing his country from a new vantage ground, for distance in space has some of the properties of distance in time, and an American in Europe has almost the point of view of an American of the next century, — all this may well have led Lowell to reflect on the fundamentals of politics, and have

served to give point to his reflections when he came to give the address expected of the incoming president of the Birmingham and Midland Institute. Moreover, the place where he was to speak reminded him of that great industrial factor which enters so powerfully into modern conceptions of the state.

It is fair, therefore, to take his address on Democracy, given 6 October, 1884, as a careful and deliberate expression of his political faith. Yet it must be borne in mind that he was somewhat hampered by his official position as well as inspired by it. He stood for the great democratic country, was its spokesman, but he was not speaking to his own countrymen, and might easily be misconstrued by foreigners if he attempted to weigh Democracy in balances designed for apothecaries' stuff, and not for hay wagons. As he himself said four years later: "I was called upon to deliver an address in Birmingham, and chose for my theme 'Democracy.' In that place I felt it incumbent on me to dwell on the good points and favorable aspects of democracy as I had seen them practically illustrated in my native land. I chose rather that my discourse should suffer through inadequacy than run the risk of seeming to forget what Burke calls 'that salutary prejudice called our country,' and that obligation which forbids one to discuss family affairs before strangers. But here among ourselves it is clearly the duty of whoever loves his country to be watchful of whatever weaknesses and perils there may be in the practi-

cal working of a system never before set in motion under such favorable auspices, or on so large a scale." [1]

One need not be nicer than his author, and it is clear from what Lowell wrote afterward that he was somewhat surprised at the importance attached to this utterance at Birmingham. In truth, it was the natural and in a measure the unstudied expression of a man whose convictions were not lightly held, had been tested by long experience, and were the warp and woof of his political loom. Studied the address was, so far as it became him not to disregard his official self, and above all not to suffer his creed to be modified by his surroundings; but, bating all this, the speech was the mellow judgment of a man who was about to retire from a post where he had been an intermediary between the two freest nations on earth, and it represented his deliberate thought upon the foundations of that freedom.

He strikes the keynote of his discourse in his opening sentence: "He must be a born leader or misleader of men, or must have been sent into the world unfurnished with that modulating and restraining balance-wheel which we call a sense of humor, who, in old age, has as strong a confidence in his opinions and in the necessity of bringing the universe into conformity with them as he had in youth." Here was Lowell, not unmindful of the zeal of his youth, standing up in the serenity of

[1] "The Place of the Independent in Politics," in *Literary and Political Addresses*.

age and about to repeat his credo in accents which could not be the self-same as those with which he had early sung. Wherein, then, does "Democracy" disclose essential agreement with its author's ardent faith in youth, or departure from the ideals then enjoyed? The one note always struck by Lowell when he was singing of freedom and democracy was that of the impregnable defence of these great truths in free and conscience-governed character, and it is this note with which his address concludes: "Our healing is not in the storm or in the whirlwind, it is not in monarchies, or aristocracies, or democracies, but will be revealed by the still small voice that speaks to the conscience and the heart, prompting us to a wider and wiser humanity." And in testing current views by his unalterable faith in humanity, he cleaves with no uncertain stroke. At the time of his address Henry George's doctrine was preached by its most eloquent expounder, Henry George himself, and Lowell says frankly: "I do not believe that land should be divided because the quantity of it is limited by nature," but a moment after, "Mr. George is right in his impelling motive; right, also, I am convinced, in insisting that humanity makes a part, by far the most important part, of political economy." So, too, he distinguishes at once between a socialism which means "the practical application of Christianity to life, and has in it the secret of an orderly and benign reconstruction," and State Socialism, whose disposition is to "cut off the very roots in personal character — self-help, fore-

thought, and frugality — which nourish and sustain the trunk and branches of every vigorous commonwealth."

What strikes one as most final in this discourse as an exponent of Lowell's attitude is his thinking through to the substance of things and his indifference to names or to terms except as they define realities. "Democracy in its best sense," he declares, "is merely the letting in of light and air." He never did believe in violent changes; in his most ardent crusade against the gigantic evil of slavery, he refused to go with his associates who were ready to sever a union which seemed to protect slavery. But with growing age it may be said that he was more averse to any change except that which was scarcely perceptible at any one moment of its progress. "Things in possession," he says, "have a very firm grip," and I think the whole address is tinged with a sense of inertia, almost of weariness, even though it rises to moments of fine courage and the expression of an unshaken faith. Was this anything more than the brooding tone of a man who after all his experience was unquestionably a man of thought rather than a man of affairs?

The election of Cleveland to the presidency made it clear that Lowell was to bring to a close his diplomatic life in England, though some of his friends both there and in America clung to the illusion that the light way in which he wore the party dress might make it possible for a Democratic president to retain in office a man who had made

himself so acceptable. Some even went so far as to see in such a policy the initiation of a new course in administration, by which ambassadors and ministers representing the United States should hold their appointments irrespective of change of party in administration, since the foreign policy of the government was practically continued on the same line, whichever party was in power. Shortly before the election Lowell wrote to Mr. Norton: "I follow your home politics with a certain personal interest. The latest news seems favorable to Blaine. I suppose in either event I am likely to be recalled, and I should not regret it but for two reasons, — certain friendships I have formed here, and the climate, which is more kindly to me than any I ever lived in. It is a singularly manly climate, full of composure and without womanish passion and extravagance." After the election he wrote to the same friend: "As for myself, my successor was already named, and the place promised him in case of Blaine's election. This I knew long ago, and I cannot quite make up my mind whether it is my weakness of good-nature and *laissez-faire* that makes me willing to stay, or a persuasion of what is best for me. Everybody here is so continually lamenting my departure that I dare say my judgment is n't worth much in the matter. My position is complicated in two ways, — the necessity of engaging a house, and now by Mabel's intention of coming abroad for some time with her children. This would change the aspect of things entirely, for they are naturally the strong-

est magnets that draw me homewards. If she come, I may stay, whatever Cleveland thinks best." To Mr. Field he wrote, 11 December, 1884: "We are well and waiting to hear our fate. I should be indifferent but for a few friendships here. All England is writing to express regret. But I am old enough to think that they will survive the loss of me. . . . Fanny is better than at any time since she left Spain, and quite willing to stay here now that the chances are against it. But she *will* not believe that anybody would recall me! She does n't know the depths of human depravity."

So wonted had Lowell become to his English surroundings that some of his friends in England laid plans to keep him with them, and sounded him as to his willingness to be nominated for the professorship of English language and literature which had lately been established in Oxford. "Had he consented to stand," says an editorial article in the *London Times*,[1] "not even a Board determined to sink Literature in Philology could have passed over his claims. But he declined for two reasons. There were claims of family over in Massachusetts; and, greatly as he loved the mental atmosphere of England, he thought it his duty not to accept a definitely English post. And the sense of duty is strong in that old Puritan stock from which he sprang."

But there came an event which made all speculation regarding his plans vain and illusory. On

[1] 13 August, 1891.

the 19th of February, 1885, Mrs. Lowell died after a short, sharp illness. The loss struck a chill in his heart which made him dumb for the most part, but he wrote to his friends, Mr. and Mrs. John W. Field, who had been sharers in his profound anxiety during those painful days in Madrid: —

London, 6 March, 1885.

Dear old Friends, — What shall I say to you, even though I have the sad comfort of feeling that whatever I say will be said to those who loved her and knew the entire beauty of her character. But I must at least say how deeply grateful I am to you whose friendly devotion in Madrid did so much to prolong a life so precious. She was given back to us for five years, and for the last two of them was hopeful enough about her health to enjoy her life. She had grown easy in her ceremonial duties, and (since the death of her mother and sisters) had no desire to return home. It is all bitterly sad.

It seems there was no hope from the first, — though I naturally thought it an attack like that of three years ago which she would pull through. The doctors all believed as I did. But they think now that there was some organic and incurable lesion of the brain, — perhaps a tumor, — and that this disturbance was the cause of her fever in Spain instead of being its consequence.

Everybody here has done for me everything that kindness could do, — especially Lady Lyttelton,

Mrs. Smalley, and Mrs. Stephen. Lady L. has been all that the tenderest sister could be.

God bless you, dear old friends!

Good-by, affectionately yours,

J. R. Lowell.

To an old and attached friend of his wife he wrote: "You will have a sad pleasure in knowing that she suffered no pain. In her last consciousness when I asked her if she suffered, she shook her head. But I cannot write about these things coolly, and hate to put sentiment on paper where it lacks the witness of sincerity which the voice carries with it. And yet I am glad to write to you who knew how noble she was. You knew also her goodness and perfect faith, and are as sure as I am that she sees God."

In fulfilling a wish of his wife, Lowell wrote to his old friend, Mrs. W. W. Story, 31 March: "I send you General Wallace's book by to-day's post. It was touchingly characteristic that I should find it on her writing-desk done up and addressed to you. She never forgot or neglected a duty. But, not knowing the requirements of the Post Office, she had closed it at both ends, and sealed it. So I was obliged, much to my regret, to have it done up in the right way. But I ordered her original address to be left inside that it might show she had not forgotten.

"I am on the whole glad to be rid of my official trammels and trappings. I do not know yet when my successor will arrive, but hardly look for him

before July. I shall then go home, but whether to stay or not will be decided after I have looked about me there. If I decide to stay I shall certainly visit the Old World pretty regularly, and shall be sure to turn up in Rome."

Lowell added one more to his public addresses before leaving England, that delivered on unveiling the bust of Coleridge, in Westminster Abbey, 7 May, 1885. It is a slight, graceful performance, but in it I think we may hear now and then that echo of his own thought about himself which we have more than once caught in his addresses, as when he says: "His critical sense rose like a forbidding apparition in the path of his poetic production;" and again: "We are here to-day not to consider what Coleridge owed to himself, to the family, or to the world, but what we owe to him. Let us at least not volunteer to draw his frailties from their dread abode. Our own are a far more profitable subject of contemplation. Let the man of imaginative temperament, who has never procrastinated, who has made all that was possible of his powers, cast the first stone."

Early in June, 1885, Lowell left England, that held his wife's grave, and returned lonely to his old home.

CHAPTER XVI

RETURN TO PRIVATE LIFE

1885–1888

Elmwood was let, and if it had been vacant Lowell could hardly have gone back there at once to live. There were too many ghosts in the house, he said. He made no attempt to take up again his college work, though he held his title of Smith Professor with *emeritus* added, and as his daughter had abandoned her plan of taking her children abroad, he made his home with her at Deerfoot Farm, Southborough, Massachusetts, about two hours by rail from Boston, in a pretty country where there was little intrusion of manufactures. He always had also a home in Boston at the house of his sister, Mrs. Putnam. He was at once besieged with invitations from many friends; as he wrote to Mr. Gilder: "I have been all these days in the condition of a bird of Paradise, unable to perch, no matter I might wish it, and perhaps embarrassed by the number of friendly roosts offered to my choice — yours not the least seductive among them." He made up his mind to attend the Commencement at Harvard, though he dreaded both the heat and the emotion, — as he wrote: "O for a good freezing English July day!" He found

himself deluged with letters — it was almost as bad as in London. Many he was unable to answer, many answered themselves after Napoleon's easy-going philosophy, but with the return to private life and in the absence of any routine duties, Lowell took up again with a careless prodigality the occupation of letter-writing. He had left friends in England who had endeared themselves to him, and whose letters to him readily drew a response, and to his old friends he was always faithful, so that, taking Mr. Norton's two volumes as a gauge, we find that he wrote twice as many friendly letters in the five years after his return to America as in the five years just preceding.

"I am already," he writes to Mr. Norton, 22 July, 1885, "in love with Southborough, which is a charmingly unadulterated New England village, and with as lovely landscapes as I ever saw. . . . 'T is an odd shift in the peep-hole of my panorama from London to this Chartreuse. For the present I like it and find it wholesome. I fancy myself happy sometimes — I am not sure — but then I never was for long;" and to Mrs. Clifford he wrote, 2 August: "I am planting my cabbages diligently and growing as much like them as I can. One must have confidants of one kind or another, and where one is cut off from women, one must follow Wordsworth's advice and seek an intimacy with nature in whose impartial eyes cabbages are as interesting as — I was going to say strawberry-leaves, but remembered that you were an Englishwoman. I *was n't* going to say women, though

logically I ought. Perhaps they are as safe. I am trying to make myself tolerable to five grandchildren, though I am not so sure that I have enough of the Grandfather in me to go round among so many."

There is a playful allusion in this letter to a side of Lowell's nature which is hinted at also in his choice of correspondents. He was peculiarly dependent upon the companionship of women, and he attracted to himself the wittiest and most responsive. For it was not so much the cushioned comfort that he looked for, as the cosiness of good fellowship and the intellectual equality which he sometimes found and always prized. He loved the generous natures with whom he had good converse, and his talk and letters went freely to these habitual dwellers in a world of honest sentiment. As in so many other cases, this side of Lowell's life found its expression in poetry, and there is no exaggeration in the sonnet "Nightwatches," written after the death of one who had stood to him in this free, intimate relation for many years.

In August he went to Washington to close his business with the State Department, and made with great pleasure the acquaintance of Mr. Bayard, then Secretary of State, and later like him to represent the country in London. He met President Cleveland also, and saw in him "a legitimate birth of Democracy and not a byblow like Butler and his kind."

Lowell was solicited both by the editor of the *Atlantic* and other friends to take up again his

contributions to literature, but he put them off. He had no inclination to write — he was glad of the solace of books and letters, but the spur to literary activity had been dulled. Yet he kept his Muse at least as a sort of friendly companion, as when on the seventy-fifth birthday of his neighbor and associate Dr. Asa Gray he wrote : —

> "Just Fate, prolong his life well spent,
> Whose indefatigable hours
> Have been as gaily innocent
> And fragrant as his flowers ! "

For a time he was content to drift, and to let the indolence which he had overmastered all his life get the upper hand of him now, even though the pressure of circumstance still lay heavy on him. "I am delighted," he wrote 13 December, 1885, to Mr. John W. Field, "to hear that you are getting on so well — better than I feared — and cannot enough admire your pluck. 'T is all the more admirable in a man like you who have the art of finding (or making) life worth living so much more than most of us. As for me I am a little tired now and then, and consent to grow old only because I can't decently help it. . . . As for my coming on to Washington — I don't know what to say. I should like to see you and Eliza, but don't see how I can find the time at present. I have a great deal to do if I could only do it. But I am beginning to feel 'old and slow,' as Ulysses said to Dante. Especially do I feel slow as compared with what I once was. . . . I am just now bothered with an address to be given next week at the

opening of a public library in Chelsea. When I have done that I mean to hold my tongue for evermore. Why should I make myself wretched when there is so much that will do it without my help?"

The address at Chelsea was the one on "Books and Libraries," included in his "Literary and Political Addresses," an address, almost conversational in its manner, marked not so much by felicity of expression as by a sanity of tone and the easy deliverance of a full mind.

A public function quite in accord with his academic and literary tastes was the presidency, which he accepted, of the American Archæological Institute. He took also the post of chairman of a committee to raise funds for the society's school at Athens. "I find myself a little out of place," he writes to Mr. Reverdy Johnson, 28 December, 1885, "but I consented to serve because I was so thoroughly persuaded both of the excellence of the object proposed and of the honor it has already done and is likely to do us in convincing Europe that we are not wholly given over as a nation to the pursuit of material good. The English school received its final impulse from the existence and success of ours."

At the end of January, 1886, Lowell went to Washington, at the urgent request of the Copyright League, to advocate the cause of international copyright. Two separate bills designed to bring this about had been offered in the Senate by Senators Hawley and Chace, and there was to be a hearing on them before the Committee on Patents.

Several publishers, authors, and members of the League had argued in favor of some action, and one gentleman, the late Mr. Gardiner G. Hubbard, had appeared in opposition. Mr. Hubbard, who was well known as the most active promoter of the then rather new Bell telephone, argued that an author's right in his literary property differed from that in any other kind of property; "that while he has the manuscript of his thoughts in his own possession, it is his own, and that when he gives it out to the world it ceases to be his own and becomes the property of the world."[1] He laid great stress, further, on the grounds of the granting of copyright by Congress, as for the benefit of the public, and not for the benefit of authors, and finally claimed that an international copyright would be injurious to the public by tending to raise the price of books.

Lowell came in while Mr. Hubbard was speaking, and was called upon by the chairman, Senator Platt of Connecticut, as soon as Mr. Hubbard had sat down. He had not intended to address the committee other than by answering such questions as might be put to him, but the last speaker's positions nettled him, and he began at once by attacking them.

"There are one or two things in the very extraordinary speech which Mr. Hubbard has just addressed to you which, I think, call for some comment on my part. He began by stating what is a very common fallacy, that there could be no

[1] Report No. 1188, 49th Congress, 1st session, p. 28.

such thing as property in books. It is generally put in another way, that there can be no such thing as property in an idea. There is a feeling, I know, among a great many people that books, even when they are printed, are like umbrellas, *feræ naturæ;* but by Mr. Hubbard we are carried farther back than that, to the very conception of the book.

"Now, nobody supposes that there can be property in an idea. The thing is a fallacy on the face of it. What we do suppose is that there is a property in the fashioning that is given to the idea, the work that a man has put into it, and I think the Constitution has already recognized that in granting patents. Patents are nothing but ideas fashioned in a certain way. For instance, the Bell telephone is precisely a parallel case to that of books, and I think there are a great many people in this country who are interested in the Bell telephone and believe it to be property.

"It appears to me that a great deal of what is said in opposition to the view of those who favor an international copyright is, like the statement of Mr. Hubbard, purely hypothetical. He tells you that it would make books dearer. I do not think he has the slightest evidence on which to show you that it would make books dearer. My own decided opinion is that it would make books cheaper. When he says, also, that it is an attempt of publishers to make large profits on small editions, instead of small profits on large editions, I think he should have a more general knowledge of the book trade — nay, of the modern tendencies of trade in

general — before he makes an assertion of that sort. It is based on the practice in England of publishing one expensive edition, and even in England the price of the book very soon falls. But the custom there has been pretty much dictated to the publishers by the owners of circulating libraries; and already there is a revolt against it, which is becoming intensified on the whole, and I believe a reform in that respect will take place there.

"I have one practical example to offer on the other side. For instance, Mr. Douglas, of Edinburgh, reprints a great many American books and pays a copyright for them. He prints them beautifully in little volumes of most convenient size, and sells them for a shilling. That is not very dear. He pays his copyright, remember. I myself am perfectly satisfied that the reading public in America, being much larger than in England, and demanding cheap books, the result of a copyright law, if we ever get one, will be to transfer the great bulk of the book trade from England to this country, and with it the publishing of books. That is my firm belief. But that is purely hypothetical, like Mr. Hubbard's argument. Yet it seems to me there would be certain reasons for thinking so in what we know of the instincts and tendencies of trade. If the larger market be here, and if books have to be printed in a cheaper form in order to suit that market, I think they will be so printed; and so far as the American public is concerned, it appears to me that if they get their books cheaply it does not so much matter where they are printed.

"I, myself, take the moral view of the question. I believe that this is a simple question of morality and justice; that many of the arguments which Mr. Hubbard used are arguments which might be used for picking a man's pocket. One could live a great deal cheaper, undoubtedly, if he could supply himself from other people without any labor or cost. But at the same time, — well, it was not called honest when I was young, and that is all I can say. I cannot help thinking that a book which was, I believe, more read when I was young than it is now, is quite right when it says that 'righteousness exalteth a nation.' I believe this is a question of righteousness. I do not wish to urge that too far, because that is considered a little too ideal, I believe. But that is my view of it, and if I were asked what book is better than a cheap book, I should answer that there is one book better than a cheap book, and that is a book honestly come by. That would be my feeling."

A series of questions and answers followed which travelled over a good deal of space, from the habit of book-buying in the two countries to the rights and wrongs involved in copyright, and Lowell drew upon personal experience and observation in a way to confirm emphatically the title which he once gave himself, "I am a bookman." "My own impression is," he said in the course of this conversation, "that the gathering of private libraries is diminishing; at least I think it is on the whole, according to my own observation. I mean to say that fewer persons, in proportion to the number of

educated people in a community, collect libraries now than formerly, because large libraries are now more readily within the reach of so many people. . . . There [in England] the collection of libraries has also diminished very much, but is still large in country houses and so on. People who are rich wish to have a handsome copy of a book in their library, and for that purpose this handsome edition is published. But if you will pardon me for digressing for a moment from this subject, it seems to me there are a great many ways in which our laws about books are very disadvantageous to the country. I think, myself, that the tax on books is a barbarism." Senator Teller here asked him if he meant the revenue tax. "Yes; it has prevented me from buying a great many books in the course of my life which would have been very valuable to me, and the imprints [reprints?] [1] were comparatively valueless when I got them. I cannot at this moment as I could if I lived in any other country of the world, even Turkey, subscribe to a foreign society and receive its publications without the trouble of going to the post-office and paying the duty; and, as I happen to live up in the country now, that is very inconvenient. To be sure, as they know me, I am able to get the books sent up to the post-office of the town where I am living and pay my tax there, but it seems to me a very bad system."

The chairman asked Lowell if people who read

[1] All these remarks were stenographically reported and subjected probably to little revision, certainly to none by the speaker.

the cheap reprints of English books preserved them to any extent; to which he replied: "No, I think they are not preserved at all. It is a marvel where they go to. Those books get out of print quickly. I remember that I religiously preserved all the books that were sent me early in my life in order to give them to the college library, because I said, whether worthless or not they will disappear; and many of those books have disappeared, and cannot be bought at all, or procured, except the copies preserved there. They go back to the paper maker as waste paper. I wish to say before I sit down, in reference to the gentleman who is to follow me,[1] that I doubt if there is a class in the community who have a more profound sympathy with the typographical unions than we have. It is not that we wish to deprive them of their bread. I personally have a very strong sympathy with all labor organizations, and I think, as I have said, the result of a copyright law will be to give them more work rather than less."

Both authors and those publishers who sympathized with the movement were concentrating their efforts at this time to secure the passage of an act which should effect international copyright. There was considerable diversity of opinion, especially regarding the clause which required all foreign books to be set up and printed in this country, if they were to be protected by copyright, but the largest support was given to the bill introduced by Senator Chace and stands now as law, practically

[1] Mr. James Welsh, representing the Typographical Union.

as then drawn. The editors of the *Century* collected vigorous expressions of opinion from the most representative writers and published the testimony in the number for February, 1886. In response to the request for an opinion, Lowell came into the editor's office one day, said he had something in his head, and wanted a pen with which to write it out. Then he sat down and wrote the famous scorcher: —

> "In vain we call old notions fudge,
> And bend our conscience to our dealing;
> The Ten Commandments will not budge,
> And stealing will continue stealing."

This was printed in facsimile at the head of the testimony. But though Lowell was an uncompromising advocate of justice in this matter, perhaps because he was so uncompromising, the most active advocates of the bill had to use a good deal of *finesse* in making his support available. The act for securing international copyright was not a partisan measure, but it was in the hands of the Republicans in Congress, mainly, and Lowell with his emphatic independence in politics was not at this time a *persona grata* with Republican politicians, who were incensed by the falling out of the ranks of men of character and influence. The act was passed finally 3 March, 1891.

There was one form of public appearance which Lowell reluctantly allowed himself to take up in this winter of 1886. The rage for Authors' Readings had set in, and under the guise of charity of one sort or another, society compelled its favorites

to stand and deliver their old poems. "I am having proof sheets," he wrote to Mr. Field, 30 March, 1886, "and I have been reading in public with O. W. H. and oh, don't I wish I had never written a verse! Take warning by me, old boy, and if you make a rhyme by accident, duck yourself in holy water to wash the Devil clean out of you, — or they 'll have you on a platform before you can say Jack Robinson, or even d—n." A keener thrust came to him now and then when he was urged to read poems which others could read, it might be, with equanimity, but which were for him like raising the lid of a coffin.

The proof sheets to which he refers in this letter were of the small volume "Democracy and other Addresses," a volume which appeared in the spring of 1886, just before Lowell went back to England for the summer. Here he gave himself up to those pleasures which he could enjoy but sparingly when he was in the official harness. His friends welcomed him most cordially, and he made a round of visits. He looked on upon the game of English politics with the eye of a trained observer, but resisted all enticements to write or speak for the English public, though he did preside at one dinner. "I made an epigram (extempore) one day on the G. O. M.," he writes to his daughter, "and repeated it to Lord Acton.

> His greatness not so much in genius lies
> As in adroitness, when occasions rise,
> Lifelong convictions to extemporize.

This morning I find the last lines quoted by Aube-

ron Herbert in a letter to the *Times*, but luckily without my name. It is a warning."

"I am living a futile life here," he writes to Mr. Norton, "but am as fond of London as Charles Lamb. The rattle of a hansom shakes new life into my old bones, and I ruin myself in them. I love such evanescent and unimportunate glimpses of the world as I catch from my flying perch. I envy the birds no longer, and learn better to converse with them. Our views of life are the same." It was the summer also when Dr. Holmes made his royal progress through England, and Lowell had the pleasure of seeing the hearty welcome his old friend received. To Mr. Field he wrote, 27 July, 1886 : —

"I met Mrs. Archibald Forbes the other day and had much talk with her about you. She did not give me much comfort, — except in telling me that you had gone away from Washington for the summer. This means, I suppose, that you are well enough to go to Ashfield, which I take as a good sign. I constantly meet old friends of yours here who ask after you affectionately. I give them what comfort I can by telling them how bravely both of you bear up under your common sorrow. . . .

"Old Mrs. Proctor told me a good story lately which may amuse you. She was breakfasting with Rogers. Thackeray and Kinglake were there among others. So was Abraham Hayward, who began abusing Houghton (then Monkton Milnes), a great favorite of hers. Kinglake tried in vain

to divert or stop him. At last Mrs. P. in a pause broke out with, 'Mr. Hayward, for the first time in my life I wish I were a man that I might call you out and make you, for the first time in your life, a gentleman!' She is as young as ever and as jealous of her lovers, tolerating no rivals.

"I am to meet Doña Emilia next Friday at dinner, and shall take upon myself to give her your kindest regards. I fear she is not very well, but she is so fond of London that it will be better for her than a course of the waters at Wiesbaden. I shall be very glad to see her again. I last met her in London four years ago. . . . By the way, I saw Don Palo (Francisco) Giher at Oxford whither I went to help Holmes on with his gown. It was a pleasant surprise to me when he rushed forward with both hands outstretched in the Master's drawing-room at Balliol and began at me in Spanish. As the window was behind him I could not see his face and did not at once recognize him. My Spanish naturally creaked a little on its hinges after such long disuse, but, with that *hidalquia* which is common to all his race, he told somebody afterwards that I spoke the most exquisite Castilian! Even at twenty I should n't have believed — and at sixty-seven!

"I have been whirling round like a marble on the van of a windmill and am worn as smooth. I roll off on the slightest incline. But I can lie still on the lap of an old friendship such as ours. Good-by and God bless you."

When Lowell went abroad in the spring of 1886

he had been asked to give the address in November at the 250th anniversary of the founding of Harvard University. The thought of it harassed him during the summer. "I am distressed with the thought of that abominable address," he wrote near the end of July. "I have not yet accepted and would decline could I give any better reason than that I have nothing to say. Nobody ever thinks *that* of any importance! What have I done to have this fly thrust into my pot of ointment which grows more precious every day by diminution like the Sibyl's leaves?" And after his return to Deerfoot Farm late in September, when he could not avoid his destiny, he wrote: "I am in direful dumps about my address, — the muse obstinately dumb." Once more, 6 October, he wrote: "I have been mulling over my address and to-day mean to break into it in earnest by blocking out an exordium. It does n't take hold of me, and I always feared it would n't. It is n't exactly in my line. To fill so large a bowl as an hour I shall have to draw on the cow with the iron tail, — and pumping is an exercise that always wearies me beyond most."

His equanimity was further shaken by a disagreeable experience when the son of an old friend, making a show of a friendly visit, led him on into discourse about England and English affairs, and then, relying on his memory, decanted the conversation into an article for a New York paper with which he was connected. "If he had reported what I really said, instead of his version of it, I

should not feel so bitterly," was Lowell's comment, and to a friend he wrote: "As for —— he *knew* that I did n't know he was interviewing me. To any sane man the shimble-shamble stuff he has made me utter is proof of it. I say 'made me utter' deliberately, because, though he has remembered some of the subjects (none of my choosing) which we talked about, he has wholly misrepresented the tone and sometimes falsified the substance of what I said. . . . The worst of ——'s infidelity (I mean to keep my temper) is that it is like a dead rat in the wall, — an awful stink and no cure."

It is not easy to say just what gave rise to the peculiarly American academic custom of making a celebration to consist of an oration and a poem, but Harvard was fortunate in being able to summon from her graduates Holmes to deliver a poem and Lowell an oration. To Lowell himself the occasion was stimulating, not only because of the pride and loyalty with which he regarded the college, but because he had given it twenty years of service, and came back to it now after nearly a decade in which he had abundant opportunity for comparison of its fruit with that which hung on the boughs of older institutions. As one reads again an address which was listened to with eagerness, one follows the course which Lowell's thought took with a deepening sense that he was speaking out of a full mind, not so much upon the specific questions of university education as upon the large aspects of education and life which rose to view as

an historical survey laid them bare. The address was the outcome of Lowell's life as a scholar broadening into the experience of a man who had had to do with the affairs of a great world. The affectionate pride which he had in New England as exemplified in his historic study, "New England Two Centuries Ago," had grown into a feeling of reverence which leads him in the opening passages of his address to set forth the founders of the college in a manner to leave on the minds of his hearers the impression of an august body chosen out of the greatest of their time to lay the foundation of a noble institution; and toward the close of his address he returns to this theme and presents it anew with an eloquence and beauty of phrase that make the passage one which may be read without fear beside the sonorous Latin which faced the audience in Sanders Theatre.

"They who, on a tiny clearing pared from the edge of the woods, built here, most probably with the timber hewed from the trees they felled, our earliest hall, with the solitude of ocean behind them, the mystery of forest before them, and all about them a desolation, most surely (*si quis animis celestibus locus*) share our gladness and our gratitude at the splendid fulfilment of their vision. If we could have but preserved the humble roof which housed so great a future, Mr. Ruskin himself would almost have admitted that no castle or cathedral was ever richer in sacred associations, in pathos of the past, and in moral significance. They who reared it had the sublime prescience of that

courage which fears only God, and could say confidently in the face of all discouragement and doubt, 'He hath led me forth into a large place; because He delighted in me, He hath delivered me.' We cannot honor them too much; we can repay them only by showing, as occasions rise, that we do not undervalue the worth of their example."

It was out of this natural consideration of the origin of the University that Lowell passed by an historical process to an analysis of the objects had in founding it and the spirit in which these objects had been pursued. He troubled himself not at all with the external affairs of the college and used no time in tracing its material development. He had found its chief office to be that of maintaining and handing down the traditions "of how excellent a thing Learning was," and his main contention was that the chief office of the University still is to train in learning rather than in knowledge. It was in urging this that he made a plea for the broad and not the special interpretation of the term Learning. As the result of his own study and observation he contended earnestly for the Humanities as the paramount interest.

Lowell admitted in a letter he wrote to G. H. Palmer, one of the most intelligent advocates of those new methods in education which found their fullest expression in what is known as the "elective system," that he based some parts of his address rather on his experience as a teacher there than on the later conditions of teaching in

the college; but after all his dispute was with the elective system, for he distrusted what looked to him like a departure from the "unbroken experience and practice of mankind." One does not need to doubt or believe in this particular collegiate method to give full assent to Lowell's dictum that "the most precious property of culture and of a college as its trustee is to maintain higher ideals of life and its purpose, to keep trimmed and burning the lamps of that pharos, built by wiser than we, that warns from the reef and shallows of popular doctrine." For as he moves forward in his address, he is drawn inevitably into a consideration of what was, first and last, the fundamental social question with him, the democratic idea. He had refrained, as we have seen, from touching in his English address on Democracy upon the perils which beset it in its American stronghold, but here, at home, in the very heart of its stoutest defence, he must needs use these perils to emphasize his doctrine that the prime business of the college is to "set free, to supple, and to train the faculties in such wise as shall make them most effective for whatever task life may afterwards set them, for the duties of life rather than for its business, and to open windows on every side of the mind where thickness of wall does not prevent it."

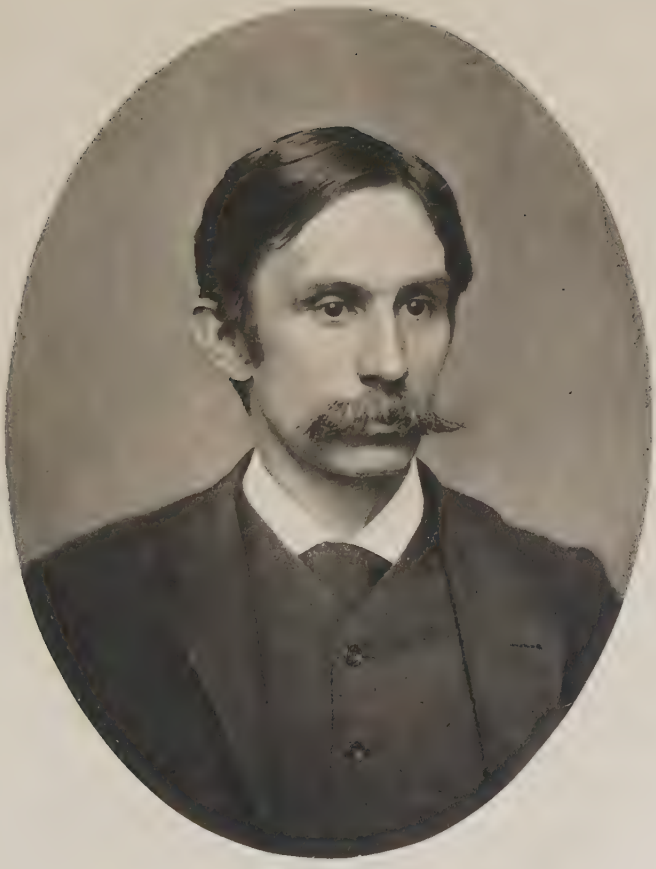
The whole address is an exemplification of how surely Lowell's mind had come to base all speculations on the broad bottom of a political organism. And as he was still unequivocally an idealist, the very melancholy of his foreboding, cropping out in

this and other addresses, bore testimony not to his faintheartedness but to his apprehension of the distance which prevailed between his ideal and the fact. He saw in the whole the sum of the particulars, and, as individual character working in freedom was the ultimate end in persons, he would listen to nothing else when he applied his ear to the movement of the people; and thus it was that he distrusted any departure of the University in its methods from that line which had resulted in the historic democracy that he believed to have found its true exemplar in New England.

When Lowell was in England in the summer of 1886 he had written to Mr. Gilder that his friend Miss Mary Boyle had some letters of Landor which she had intrusted to him for publication, and he proposed to preface them with an introduction of his own if Mr. Gilder would publish the paper in the *Century*. His letters show that he was moved not by any desire to write on Landor, but to help an old friend, and now that his Harvard address was off his hands, he applied himself to the task. He had the curiosity to look up his early paper on Landor in the *Massachusetts Quarterly*,[1] in which he remarks he found one good sentence and one other that he could not understand.[2] He sent the paper to Mr. Gilder, 23 December, 1886: "I send you a Christmas gift. I have made more of it

[1] See *supra*, vol. i. p. 293.

[2] "I went also," he says, after hunting up the magazine in the Athenæum, "to see Whittier, who was in town. He was very cordial. There is a wrinkled freshness about him as of a russet apple in April, but I fear we shan't have him much longer."



than I expected, but you may eat only the plums if you like and give to the poor the pudding in which I have hidden them. The letters, thank Heaven, are better than I thought. The last (on Powers's death) is charming. I have arranged them as well as I could without books. There is one on the Chinese War which I could date could I remember the year of that outrage — 1841 or 2? You might find out.

"Have I added too much of my own? And is it dull? *I* am, but that 's nothing to the purpose. I could easily have held my peace, but I promised to play the Master of Ceremonies and must proclaim the rank of my guests.

"I am sorry that some of the letters are copied on both sides. Most of them are in proper form. Send me proof here unless I say otherwise.

> If the hunting up of Christmas gifts has n't killed her,
> Give my love to Mrs. Gilder." [1]

[1] A month before Mr. Gilder had asked for a poem, and Lowell had put him off thus: "Rhymes for Gilder indeed! He does n't need 'em for he can make 'em. But I have a pocketful. I give you one at a time: —

> "Love to Mrs. Gilder
> *And* to all the childer."

After that, in a series of brief notes called out by the Landor article, there was a peppering of these lines, each note ending in a couplet, as —

> "Give my love to Mrs. Gilder,
> Hope this weather has n't chill'd her."

> "Love to Mrs. Gilder,
> Glad that it thrilled her."

> "Love to Mrs. Gilder:
> At her birth kind fairies filled her
> (to be continued in my next)."

The paper, which is included in "Latest Literary Essays and Addresses," was a most agreeable compound of criticism and personal reminiscence, and contains what Lowell rarely ventured on in his printed work, but now and then in his letters with real success — the portraiture of a man.

The article did not appear for a year; meanwhile he was in correspondence with Mr. Aldrich respecting some poems, and he had engaged to write the introduction to a subscription book, "The World's Progress." He had the assurance that the work thus introduced was a serious one, but his introduction had no special relation to it; it was an independent paper. "It rather attracts me," he wrote, "through my sense of humor. It will be pure creation made out of nothing, not even nebula or star-dust," and he added, what was indeed the secret of his undertaking the work, "the money it will fetch me will be a great medicine. Grandfathers get miserly. I never saved a penny till I had two [grandchildren]." As the new year opened, and he found himself in the midst of this set task: "I don't get on with the world at all since I half promised to write an introduction to 'The World's Progress,' a megatherium of a book in two volumes, quarto. I hear their heavy footfall behind me wherever I go, and am sure they will trample me into the mud at last."

"(Continued)

Cup with all sweet gifts and trilled her

(to be continued)"

but in his next he is obliged to write: "I have lost my cue in the epic poem to Mrs. Gilder's address. I thought I could carry it in my memory, but find that her pocket has holes in it."

The Introduction, though undertaken apparently with a reluctant rather than an eager mind, and bearing indeed some marks of a perfunctory performance, is yet not only interesting in itself but valuable as a mirror in which to catch a passing reflection of its author's mind. Aware that the book to follow would deal largely with those advances in civilization which publishers and writers in their bookkeeping like to record to the credit of the world, he cannot forbear at the outset gently reminding his readers that with all our statistics we cannot "make ourselves independent of the inextinguishable lamps of heaven," and with a sort of under-the-breath doubt if he may not be letting his own temperament get in the way of more exact standards of measurement, he allows himself for a moment to pause over the changes in civilization, which accepted as progress do yet obliterate some very wonderful prints which the foot of man has made. It is the old song of *laudator temporis acti*, sung to the air of his own brooding age.

But having thus, as it were, satisfied his conscience by discharging the debt he owed to his own personal taste in the matter of what constitutes progress, he takes up the real business of the Introduction and quickly becomes forgetful of himself the philosopher in the pleasure which the poet and artist in him may take with a very large and plastic substance. Near the close of the paper he writes: "Should the doctrines of Natural Selection, Survival of the Fittest, and Heredity, be accepted as Laws of Nature, they must profoundly

modify the thought of men and, consequently, their action." He himself, with his aversion to the speculations of science, had but a bowing acquaintance with those investigations of Darwin and Huxley and their fellows which brought about so great a revolution of thought in his lifetime, and clearly was impatient of what he regarded as the encroachment of science upon the humanities in the formation of intellectual beliefs; but he was, after all, a child of his time, and his thought had been, whether he would or no, modified by the results of scientific investigation. At any rate, he had the poet's faculty for appropriating results, and the picture which he draws in this Introduction of the evolution of the earth and of man's early mastery of it is a striking piece of imaginative writing, touched here and there with a dash of wit which one almost fancies was Lowell's intellectual aside to the Balaam-like prophecy he was compelled to deliver.

It is, however, when he emerges in his thought upon those great plains of society where his mind was most wont to dwell, that Lowell falls into an earnestness of tone which quite as surely indicates that he had been warmed by the fire he had kindled into a healthy and natural vigor, and when, from a rapid survey of the world's past growing more and more present under his touch, he comes to forecast the world's future, it is with a voice familiar through his recent addresses and poems and letters that we hear him speak. Again he recurs to that significant element in modern life about which his mind was constantly revolving,

the political organization of men in its relation to their individual character, and his definitions of Democracy are here more precise, more carefully formulated than in any of his writings. The main passage is so notable that it deserves to be read again, apart from its context, as the last statement made by one whose whole life was, in a measure, occupied with an exposition of the truths here laid down.

"In casting the figure of the World's future, many new elements, many disturbing forces, must be taken into account. First of all is Democracy, which, within the memory of men yet living, has assumed almost the privilege of a Law of Nature, and seems to be making constant advances towards universal dominion. Its ideal is to substitute the interest of the many for that of the few as the test of what is wise in polity and administration, and the opinion of the many for that of the few as the rule of conduct in public affairs. That the interest of the many is the object of whatever social organization man has hitherto been able to effect seems unquestionable; whether their opinions are so safe a guide as the opinions of the few, and whether it will ever be possible, or wise if possible, to substitute the one for the other in the hegemony of the World, is a question still open for debate. Whether there was ever such a thing as a Social Contract or not, as has been somewhat otiosely discussed, this, at least, is certain, — that the basis of all Society is the putting of the force of all at the disposal of all, by means of some arrangement

assented to by all, for the protection of all, and this under certain prescribed forms. This has always been, consciously or unconsciously, the object for which men have striven, and which they have more or less clumsily accomplished. The State — some established Order of Things, under whatever name — has always been, and must always be, the supremely important thing; because in it the interests of all are invested, by it the duties of all imposed and exacted. In point of fact, though it be often strangely overlooked, the claim to any selfish hereditary privilege because you are born a man is as absurd as the same claim because you are born a noble. In a last analysis, there is but one natural right; and that is the right of superior force. This primary right having been found unworkable in practice, has been deposited, for the convenience of all, with the State, from which, as the maker, guardian, and executor of Law, and as a common fund for the use of all, the rights of each are derived, and man thus made as free as he can be without harm to his neighbor. It was this surrender of private jurisdiction which made civilization possible, and keeps it so. The abrogation of the right of private war has done more to secure the rights of man, properly understood, — and, consequently, for his well-being, — than all the theories spun from the brain of the most subtle speculator, who, finding himself cramped by the actual conditions of life, fancies it as easy to make a better world than God intended, as it has been proved difficult to keep in running order the world

that man has made out of his fragmentary conception of the divine thought. The great peril of democracy is that the assertion of private right should be pushed to the obscuring of the superior obligation of public duty."

Having thus discoursed upon what is most fundamental in political thinking, he passes, after a brief reflection upon the growing function of the press, to enquire into that new factor in the problem of the future which takes the name of Socialism. He distinguishes here, as elsewhere, between socialism as a new reading of the law of rights and duties, and State Socialism. He repeats his warning against this form which he holds destructive of a genuine democracy, for he distrusts the robbery of man's freedom of development in character for the sake of paying him back in the paper promises of security from misfortune. The whole latter part of this Introduction, in spite of its hurried manner, is a footnote to the history of Lowell's thought on some of the greatest of themes.

The intimation given above, that Lowell could not quite afford the luxury of being a bystander in his old age, reminds us how close he sailed to the wind throughout his life, yet how faithfully he kept off the reefs of debt. At times he had enough to live on comfortably; when he could not live what is called comfortably, he simply drew in, and at least knew not the discomfort of living beyond his means. He had not now the resources of his professorship, and he was fain to increase the income which his small estate and his copyrights

brought him by such tasks as the Introduction we have considered, and other more congenial literary labors. His reputation, fortunately, had now turned capital so far as the quick assets of his writing went. He could command good prices from editors, but by a not uncommon fortune periodical work yielded him much better return than his accumulating books. In a letter written to Thomas Hughes, 10 January, 1887, he makes this frank statement of his affairs: "Rejoice with me that I am getting popular in my old age, and hope to pay my this year's trip to the dear old Home without defrauding my grandchildren.[1] I get twenty-five cents, I think it is, on copies [of "Democracy"] sold during the first eight months after publication, and then it goes into my general copyright, for which I am paid £400 a year. Not much after nearly fifty years of authorship, but enough to keep me from the almshouse."

His friends sometimes chided him for not reckoning in his price the worth of his name, but he had it not in him to drive sharp bargains. Still, now and then he braced himself, as when he wrote to a friendly editor respecting a poem he had sent him: "Another magazine would have given me ——. I am not speaking of intrinsic but of commercial values, of course. I think one ought to make hay while the sun shines, and mine, after a good deal of cloudy weather, seems to be shining now. As I don't know how long this meteoric phenomenon is to last, I must be diligent with my

[1] That is, by parting with more of his land in Cambridge.

windrows and cocks that my crop may be in the mow before a change of weather. As an author, you will sympathize with me, while as editor, you will ask me blandly how flint-skins are quoted in the last prices current. I fancy you with that dual expression of countenance typified by Hamlet as 'one dropping and one auspicious eye' — only I see that I have got the epithets in the wrong order for the metre."

In the letter to Mr. Hughes last quoted, Lowell says: "I am going to talk on politics to the people of Chicago on my next birthday," and he went to Chicago to fulfil this engagement. The Union League Club of that city had proposed to celebrate Washington's birthday by public exercises in Music Hall, consisting mainly of Lowell's address, which was announced to be on "American Politics." The house was completely filled and Lowell was given a hearty welcome. The audience, however, was greatly taken aback at the first words of the speaker, for he said when he came forward that he had changed his subject and would speak not on "American Politics," but upon the principles of literary criticism as illustrated by Shakespeare's Richard III., a paper which he had read in 1883 before the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, and which was included, after his death, in "Latest Literary Essays and Addresses." He went on to say that in announcing politics as the subject of his address he had not fully realized the conditions under which it was to be delivered; that he was accustomed to speak frankly, but that

he found himself the guest and, in a manner, the representative of the Club. What he had to say would plainly give offence to his hosts, and he was thus compelled on the score of courtesy to change his subject.

The situation was one which might have led those present to detect some irony in Lowell's politeness. The Union League Club was a Republican organization under the control of the Blaine wing of the party. It had succeeded in getting rid of those Republicans who had been hostile to Blaine, amongst whom was the gentleman who was Lowell's host. But Lowell had made no concealment of the position he occupied. He made it clear enough at this time, a couple of days later when he was a guest of the Harvard Club of Chicago: "I stood outside of party," he then said, "for nearly twenty-five years, and I was perfectly happy, I assure you. . . . Party organization, no doubt, is a very convenient thing, but a great many people, and I feel very strongly with them, feel that when loyalty to party means worse disloyalty to conscience, it is then asking more than any good man or any good citizen ought to concede."

Upon his return from Chicago Lowell gave six lectures on the Old Dramatists before the Lowell Institute. Though in accepting the invitation he was returning to an early love he had never forsaken, the preparation was a burden. "I have n't time for a word more," he wrote to Mr. Gilder, 3 March, 1887, "for I begin a course of lectures next Tuesday and have n't yet begun to

write them, though I have done a deil o' thinking," and to Mr. Higginson on 8 March: "I am fagged to death. I never ought to have consented to the Lowell Lectures. If I get over them without breaking down, I shall be happy. After they are (if *I* am not) over, I will try to do what you ask. But my brains are husks just now." Perhaps there was no better barometer of Lowell's spirits than his temper regarding out of door life. Time was when the frosty winter air was elixir to him, but now he writes: "It is growing colder as my legs inform me — for I have had no fire to-day. I look out of window and see that the sun is gone behind a cloud, and the white lines of snow along the walls marking out the landscape as if for a tennis-court of Anakim. I don't like winter so well as I used. It tempts the rheumatism out of all its ambushes, as the sun thaws out snakes. And the walking is like bad verses." The confession gains force when one considers that all his life Lowell had been indifferent to the need of a top coat, and preferred to work in his study at a temperature of 60°.

In his first lecture Lowell said that he should have preferred to entitle his course "Readings from the Old English Dramatists with illustrative comments," and that is practically what he made of his work. The slim volume in which, after his death, the six lectures were contained, does not at all stand for six hours' entertainment of his audience; long passages which he read from printed books do not appear at all, as there were no pas-

sages in his written lectures which introduced or followed them. Lowell was recurring to a familiar theme, and his intention plainly was to speak freely out of a full mind. He does not appear to have re-read his early "Conversations;" he had not seen it, he said, for many years, and he was not quite sure just what its subjects were. A comparison of the two treatments separated by forty-four years shows curious likenesses and differences. As will be remembered, the young critic was so zealous over his ideas of reform that Chapman and Ford, the only dramatists he treated, and Chaucer, were often no more than mere prompters in the discussion of some current phase of morals or society. A little of this disposition to vagrancy reappears in these later talks, for they are quite as informal in their way as were the earlier Conversations. But in place of the topics connected with reform, there are more cognate themes. Since he is to speak of Marlowe, he finds it easy to make, by way of preface, an enquiry into the refinement which had been going on in the language, and so, by natural association, to one of his old themes, the sanctity of the English tongue. In introducing Webster also, he has some quiet criticism on the function of Form; and when he passes to Chapman, an enquiry into the personal element in literature leads him into some remarks on biographies, autobiographies, and the modern zest for intimacies in the lives of men, remarks which gain some earnestness, no doubt, from experiences which he had undergone.

But for the most part, he keeps closely to his business of inviting his hearers to share with him the enjoyment of the dramatists whom he reads and comments on, and when we compare the actual appreciation and criticism in the two books, the difference is mainly in the mellowness and quiet assurance which pervade the later treatment, and in the fact that in the earlier book he was more concerned with what in old-fashioned terms were the "beauties" of the poets, in the later, with the art and the constructive faculty.

In his half-homeless condition, Lowell looked with eagerness to his summers in England. There he had in its leisurely form the social life which had come to be a real solace to him, and there too he found the world arranged for the ease and comfort of a solitary. He sailed for England this year on the 21st of April, and found himself shortly in his familiar lodgings in London. He liked the sense of world activity which he felt in the heart of that great city. "Nothing can be more bewildering," he wrote to his daughter, "than the sudden change in my habits and surroundings. Were it merely from the dumbness of Southborough to the clatter and chatter of London, it would be queer enough; from the rising and falling murmur of the mill to this roar of the human torrent. But I can hardly help laughing sometimes when I think how a single step from my hermitage takes me into Babylon. Meanwhile it amuses and interests me. My own vitality seems to reënforce itself as if by some unconscious trans-

fusion of the blood from these ever-throbbing arteries of life into my own."[1]

There were two places in England, outside of London, in which he especially delighted: one was St. Ives in Cornwall, the resort of his friends Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Stephen, the other was Whitby in Yorkshire. For six years, with the exception of 1885, he had made a summer stay in Whitby. It was then a quiet, primitive place; now it knows the flood of summer excursionists. Lowell liked the folk he met there, who reminded him of New England country folk. He liked the walks in the neighborhood and the sounding sea, and he was wont to invite to his lodgings friends whose companionship he cared for. An appreciative follower in Lowell's footsteps has made an agreeable record of the memories he left behind in Whitby, especially with the two Misses Gallillee, with whom he lodged.[2] The paper deals with the picturesque properties of the little village, and has also a faint fragrance from the very human reminiscences of Lowell that remained in the minds of those who came near to him. "In the eyes of the positive little person — an innate Yankee of Yorkshire blood — whose duty it was to change the courses on these occasions, literary men as such have no glamour at all. Her acquaintance includes a number, and her North Country vocabulary has terms wherewith to dispose of them

[1] *Letters*, ii. 337.

[2] See "A Poet's Yorkshire Haunts," in the *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1895.

briefly. But there is neither reservation nor qualification in the tone in which she says of the conclusion of a certain discussion, listened to between times in the serving, 'I never forgot it.' It had wound up in a round-robin agreement, according to which each person present was to say by what he should best like to be remembered. The host spoke last, and the sentence in which his admiring hearer puts him on record is, 'By kindly acts and helpful deeds.' "

Yet much at home as he was in Whitby, Lowell could not well resist the contagion which attacks all summer wanderers. As he wrote to Lady Lyttleton from Whitby, 7 September: "I am a bird of passage now, and that makes me feel unsettled wherever I am, but I have enjoyed my stay here, and the hogsheads of fresh air I have drunk have done me good. . . . I go down to Somersetshire on Saturday to Mr. Hobhouse, who has promised to show me Wells Cathedral, the only one in England I have not seen. Thence I go to the Stephens." During this summer he was fitfully engaged in bringing together such poems as he had written since the volume "Under the Willows," or had written before but had not included in that volume, and he continued his work upon it after his return to Deerfoot Farm in the fall. He pondered over what he should include, what leave out, and the medley which resulted caused him, in the volume "Heartsease and Rue," to distribute the contents without regard to chronology under a variety of headings, — Friendship, Sentiment,

Fancy, Humor and Satire, Epigrams. "My book will be a raft manned by the press-gang, I fear," he wrote. "There will be some hitherto unprinted things in it — many of them trifles — some of which, however, please my fancy and may another's here and there." As he went on with the work of collection, he grew more and more distrustful. "I feel," he wrote 22 December, 1887, "like a young author at his first venture. I think there will be some nice things in the book, but fear that *my* kind of thing is a little old-fashioned. People want sensation rather than sense nowadays." Again, 4 January, 1888, he writes: "I am wondering more and more if my poems are good for anything after all. They are old-fashioned in their simplicity and straightforwardness of style, — and everybody writes so plaguily well nowadays. I fear that I left off my diet of bee bread too long and have written too much prose. A poet should n't be, nay, he can't be anything else without loss to him as poet, however much he may gain as man."

Yet he liked the little task of collecting the volume, and there was a pleasurable content in his uneventful country life with his books and pipe. "My mind is busy," he wrote, "and I like it. I am sitting in the sun without fire and I like that. My pipe tastes good and I like that too, for it enables me to treat with indifference some alarums and incursions of the gout which I was sharply aware of yesterday and this morning. No weather-sign is so truthful as this: If your pipe is savory, nothing is the matter with you. Put that in *your* pipe and smoke it!"

Lowell's friendliness showed itself in the informal visits he liked to make to his friends when he was in town, and the familiar letters he wrote from the country. He was rather more ready to entertain a correspondent with a bit of criticism than to heed the calls made on him by editors for the same kind of writing done with formal purpose. Thus he writes to Mrs. Bell from Deerfoot Farm, Thanksgiving Day, 1887: "A second-rate author two hundred years old has a great advantage over his juniors of our own day. If he himself have not the merit of originality, his language has that of quaintness which sometimes gives him a charm similar in its effect though very inferior in quality. I think this is true of Feltham, though it be now more than twenty years since I have looked into him. I had read him in the day of my superstition when one takes all established reputations for granted, and read him over again after Experience had let fall her fatal clarifying drops into my eyes. Woe's me, how he has dwarfed! I wrote my opinion of him on the flyleaf of my little quarto edition, and all I can recollect of him is that I called his style 'lousy with Latinisms.' Pardon me. Swift was still read when I was young, and how resist the alliteration? I can pardon Browne's Latinisms, nay, his Græcisms too, and even like them. They are resolved in the powerful menstruum of his thought. They are farsought and yet seem not farfetched. Feltham's are stuck-in like plums in his poor pudding and make the dough more dismal by contrast. He has n't *stoned* them

and we crush between our teeth something hard and out of place that leaves an acrid taste behind it. I remember one phrase of his that tickled me — the 'spacious ears' of the elephant. It fits another animal, and sometimes when I have been assfixiated by an audience I have been tempted to beg of them to 'lend me their spacious ears.'

"I think it possible that I gave Longfellow the references to him, for I was reading him about the time the Dante translation was going on. I could tell if I had my copy here and could take a look at the flyleaves.

"I may do Feltham wrong. The *navicella di nostro ingenio* draws more water as we grow older, and grounds in the shallows where we found good water-fowling in our youth.

"No doubt the book is in the Athenæum, — but wait, please, till I can lend you my copy. It is at Elmwood, and I can get it after I come back from New York, whither I go to be baited for the benefit of the International Copyright League. I wish there were a concise and elegant Latinism for D—n! I would bring it in gracefully here.

"I did n't mean to write all this and should n't if I had n't had something else I ought to be doing. How tempting the duty that lies farthest from us always is, to be sure!"

It may have struck the reader how little comment, comparatively, Lowell made during his life upon his fellows in American literature. We must except of course his poetic criticism in "A Fable for Critics" and "Agassiz;" but in his prose crit-

icism he occupied himself most constantly with the dead, not the living. When, later, he spoke on "Our Literature" at the Washington Centennial in New York he confined himself to generalities. It is worth noting, therefore, that on an occasion when he was called on to preside at an Authors' Reading for the benefit of the Copyright League[1] he prefaced his argument for an international copyright act with a résumé of the course of American literature, and some more specific characterization of the contemporaries with whom his own name always will be associated. As a somewhat unwonted personal sketch, even though scarcely more than an off-hand deliverance, it may well be given here as one of the last of Lowell's public addresses.

"When I was beginning life, as it is called, — as if we were not always beginning it! — the question 'Who reads an American book?' still roused in the not too numerous cultivated class among us a feeling of resentful but helpless anger. The pens of our periodical writers fairly sputtered with rage, and many a hardly suppressed imprecation might be read between their lines. Their position was, in truth, somewhat difficult. We had had Jonathan Edwards, no doubt; and people were still living who thought Barlow's 'Hasty Pudding' a lightsome *jeu d'esprit*, and who believed that Dwight's 'Conquest of Canaan' was a long stride towards that of posterity and the conversion of the heathen there. We had had Freneau, who wrote a single line, —

[1] Chickering Hall, New York, 28 November, 1887.

'The hunter and the deer a shade,'

which had charmed the ear and cheated the memory of Scott (I think it was) till he mistook it for his own. We had the 'Star Spangled Banner,' and two or three naval ballads which, to my ear, have the true rough and ready tone. Philip Cook, of Virginia, had written a few graceful and musical lyrics. We had 'McFingal,' as near its model as any imitation of the inimitable can be, but far indeed from that intricate subtlety of wit which makes 'Hudibras' a metaphysical study as well as an intellectual delight. We had in the 'Federalist' a mine of political wisdom by which even Burke might have profited, and whose golden veins are not yet exhausted, as foreign statists and jurists are beginning to discover. But of true literature we had next to nothing. Of what we had, Duyckinck's scholarly 'Cyclopædia of American Literature' gives us an almost too satisfactory notion. Of what we had not, there was none to tell us, for there were no critics. We had no national unity, and therefore no national consciousness, and it is one of the first conditions of a virile and characteristic literature that it should feel solid and familiar earth under its feet. New England had indeed a kind of unity, but it was a provincial unity, and those hardy commonwealths that invented democracy were not and could not yet be quite in sympathy with the new America that was to adopt and expand it. Literature thrives in an air laden with tradition, in a soil ripe with immemorial culture, in the temperature, steady and stimu-

lating, of historic associations. We had none of these. What semblance we had of them was English, and we long continued to bring earth from the mother-country to pot our imported plants with, as the crusaders brought home that of Palestine to be buried in. And all this time our native oak was dropping its unheeded acorns into the crannies of the rock where by and by their sturdy roots would make room for themselves and find fitting nourishment.

"Never was young nation on its way to seek its fortune so dumfounded as Brother Jonathan when John Bull, presenting what seemed to his startled eyes a blunderbuss, cried gruffly from the roadside, 'Stand, and deliver a literature!' He was in a 'pretty fix,' as he himself would have called it. After fumbling in all his pockets, he was obliged to confess that he had n't one about him at the moment, but vowed that he had left a beautiful one at home which he would have fetched along — only it was so everlasting heavy. If he had but known it, he carried with him the pledge of what he was seeking in that vernacular phrase 'fix,' which showed that he could invent a new word for a new need without asking leave of anybody.

"Meanwhile the answer to Sydney Smith's scornful question was shaping itself. Already we had Irving, who after humorously satirizing the poverty of our annals in his 'Knickerbocker,' forced to feel the pensive beauty of what is ancient by the painful absence of it, first tried to create an artificial antiquity as a substitute, and then sought in

the old world a kindlier atmosphere and themes more sympathetic with the dainty and carefully shaded phrase he loved. He first taught us the everliving charm of style, most invaluable and most difficult of lessons. Almost wholly English, he is yet our earliest classic, still loved in the Old Home and the New. Then came Cooper, our first radically American author, with the defects of style that come of half-culture, but a man of robust genius who, after a false start, looked about him to recognize in the New Man of the New World an unhackneyed and unconventional subject for Art. Brockden Brown had shown vivid glimpses of genius, but of a genius haunted by the phantasms of imagination and conscious of those substantial realities they mocked only as an opium eater might be. His models were lay figures shabby from their long service in the studios of Godwin and the Germans. Cooper first studied from the life, and it was the *homo Americanus* with our own limestone in his bones, our own iron in his blood, that sat to him. There had been pioneers before him, like Belknap and Breckenridge, who had, in woodman's phrase, blazed the way for him, but he found new figures in the forest, autochthonous figures, and on the ocean, whose romance he was the first to divine, he touched a nerve of patriotic pride that still vibrates. I open upon my boyhood when I chance on a page of his best. In prose we had also Channing, who uttered the perceptions, at once delicate and penetrating like root fibres, of a singularly intuitive mind in a diction of sober

fervor where the artist sometimes elbows aside the preacher; and Webster, the massive simplicity of whose language and the unwavering force of whose argument, flashing into eloquent flame as it heated, recalled to those who listened and saw before them one of the most august shapes manhood ever put on, no inadequate image of Pericles. We had little more. Emerson was still letting grow or trying in short flights those wings that were to lift him and us to Heaven's sweetest air. Hawthorne, scarce out of his teens, had given in 'Fanshawe' some inkling of his instinct for style and of the direction his maturer genius was to choose, but no glimpse of that creative imagination, the most original and profound of these latter days. Our masters of historical narration were yet to come.

"In poetry we were still to seek. Byrant's 'Waterfowl' had begun that immortal flight that will be followed by many a delighted eye long after ours shall have been darkened; Dana had written some verses which showed a velleity for better and sincerer things; Willis was frittering away a natural and genuine gift; Longfellow was preluding that sweet, pure, and sympathetic song which persuaded so many Englishmen that he must be a countrymen of theirs. In his case the question certainly became not 'Who reads an American book?' but 'Who does *not* read one?' Holmes had written one imperishable poem.

"This was the state of things when I was a boy. That old question, once so cruelly irritating, because it was so cruelly to the point, has long ago

lost its sting. When I look round me on this platform, I see a company of authors whose books are read wherever English is read, and some whose books are read in languages that are other than their own. The American who lounges over an English railway-book-stall while his train is making-up sees almost as many volumes with names of his countrymen on their backs as he sees of native authors. American Literature has asserted and made good its claim to a definite place in the world. Sixty years ago there were only two American authors, Irving and Cooper, who could have lived by their literary incomes, and they fortunately had other sources of revenue. There are now scores who find in letters a handsome estate. Our literature has developed itself out of English literature, as our political forms have developed themselves out of English political forms, but with a difference. Not as parasitic plants fed from the parent stock, but only as new growths from seeds the mother tree has dropped, could they have prospered as they have done. And so our literature is a part of English literature and must always continue to be so, but, as I have said, with a difference. What that difference is, it would be very hard to define, though it be something of which we are very sensible when we read an American book. We are, I think, especially sensible of it in the biography of any of our countrymen, as I could not help feeling as I read that admirable one of Emerson by Mr. Cabot. There was nothing English in the conditions which shaped the earlier part

of Emerson's life. Something Scottish there was, it may be said, but the later life at Concord which was so beautiful in its noble simplicity, in its frugality never parsimonious, and practised to secure not wealth but independence, that is — or must we say was? — thoroughly American. Without pretension, without swagger, with the need of proclaiming itself, and with no affectation of that commonness which our late politicians seem to think especially dear to a democracy, it represented whatever was peculiar and whatever was best in the novel inspirations of our soil. These inspirations began to make themselves felt early in our history and I think I find traces of their influence even so long ago as the 'Simple Cobbler of Agawam,' published in 1647. Its author, Ward, had taken his second degree at Cambridge and was a man past middle life when he came over to Massachusetts, but I think his book would have been a different book had he written it in England. This Americanism which is there because we cannot help it, not put there because it is expected of us, gives, I think, a new note to our better literature and is what makes it fresh and welcome to foreign ears. We have developed, if we did not invent, a form of racy, popular humor, as original as it is possible for anything to be, which has found ideal utterance through the genius of 'Mark Twain.' I confess that I look upon this general sense of the comic among our people and the ready wit which condenses it into epigram, as one of the safeguards of our polity. If it be irreverent it is not

superstitious ; it has little respect for phrases ; and no nonsense can long look it in the eye without flinching."

"Heartsease and Rue" was published in the early spring of 1888 and immediately afterward Lowell printed in the *Atlantic* his poem "Turner's Old Téméraire, under a Figure symbolizing the Church." This poem and "How I consulted the Oracle of the Goldfishes," which appeared in the *Atlantic* for August, 1889, were printed in the thin posthumous volume of "Last Poems," and belong thus in the group which most effectively represents Lowell's mood on the profoundest themes at the end of his life. The first poem in "Heartsease and Rue," that on Agassiz, which heads the section entitled Friendship, has already been noted in connection with the time when it was written. A little of the same pathos of parting with old friends is in the postscript of the letter to Curtis, and in this as in the former, the poet's mind runs on naturally in its speculation to the new To Be. A single hint of a thought which filled many of Lowell's hours occurs in the poem when he says : —

> "With bits of wreck I patch the boat shall bear
> Me to that unexhausted Otherwhere ; "

but it is in the group of poems referred to above that one sees most clearly a recurrence to the great underlying questions of faith. With a half-mocking smile Lowell asks in "Credidimus Jovem regnare" if science has found the key which religion has lost, and falls back on the somewhat

lame conclusion that he had best keep his key, which may be but a rusty inheritance, on the chance that the door and lock may some day be made to fit the key. Again, in the poem "How I consulted the Oracle of the Goldfishes," where he muses over the realities and illusions of the spiritual world, he does not deny the doubts that have arisen in his own mind, but after all refuses to permit even his doubts to dismay him.

> "Here shall my resolution be:
> The shadow of the mystery
> Is haply wholesomer for eyes
> That cheat us to be over-wise,
> And I am happy in my sight
> To love God's darkness as His light."

Nor will he allow himself, even when contemplating what he regards as the obscuration of the Church's light, to look upon this as the last state of organic faith. He takes that noble painting by Turner, "The Fighting Téméraire tugged to her last berth, to be broken up," and sees science, "a black demon, belching fire and steam," drag it away "to gather weeds in the regardless stream." Ruskin makes the picture an unconscious expression by the painter of his own return to die by the shore of the Thames, "the cold mists gathering over his strength, and all men crying out against him, and dragging the old 'Fighting Téméraire' out of their way, with dim, fuliginous contumely;" but surely this is rather the passionate comment of a disciple making his master's work prophetic. Lowell's poem strikes a deeper than a personal note. It is a fine imaginative conception, a rare interpretation

of a great work of art by another work of art, and what is noticeable in the cry of the poem is the protest which Lowell, in his instinctive faith, makes against the finality of his own interpretation. He sees in imagination the splendid history of the church, and no fighter under Nelson could have witnessed this desolate funeral of the great ship with more anguish than Lowell has thrown into his pathetic words; but as the English sailor could have righted himself with a vision of the glories of the future English navy, so Lowell closes his dirge with a triumphant prophecy: —

> "Shall nevermore, engendered of thy fame,
> A new sea-eagle heir thy conqueror name,
> And with commissioned talons wrench
> From thy supplanter's grimy clench
> His sheath of steel, his wings of smoke and flame?
>
> "This shall the pleased eyes of our children see;
> For this the stars of God long even as we;
> Earth listens for his wings; the Fates
> Expectant lean; Faith cross-propt waits,
> And the tired waves of Thought's insurgent sea." [1]

[1] In one of the verses of this poem Lowell had used the picturesque phrase: —

> "Let the bull-fronted surges glide
> Caressingly along thy side,
> Like glad hounds leaping by the huntsman's knees."

In answer to a criticism from a friend, he wrote: "There is no mixed metaphor. I don't compare the waves to bulls, but merely say they are bull-fronted, — and so they are, with the foam curling over between their horns as in the bulls which I have often interviewed in the pastures here — with a stout stone wall between us *viersteht sich*. That I afterward say they leap like hounds implies no confusion of images. My dog Vixen has a bull-front, if ever there was one, and is always leaping about my knees, as my

In taking another great painting as the prompter of his verse, Titian's so-called "Sacred and Profane Love," Lowell again is not so much interpreting the painter's thought as he is using the canvas for a mirror in which to read his own soul, and though in printing "Endymion" he adds the gloss "a mystical comment," one may guess that Lowell in this twilight of his life, musing upon the ideals which had beckoned him from earliest days, still saw in the heavens that vision of beauty, of truth, and of freedom which had never been dethroned in his soul. Faithfulness to high emprise, — that at least he could declare of himself amidst all the doubt that beclouded his intellectual vision, and it was fitting that the poet should, in this veiled figure of Endymion, see the reflection of his own face and form.

In sending "Endymion" to his publishers for insertion in the volume "Heartsease and Rue," Lowell had written from Deerfoot Farm, 20 December, 1887: "I hoped to have sent this ['Endymion'] by Monday morning's post, but for two days after my return my head continued to be cloggy and my vein would n't flow. I have at last managed to give what seems to me as much consecutiveness as they need to what have been a heap of fragments

trousers can testify. —— saw the waves and heard 'em butt against the prow. Ask her. I always see what I describe while I am thinking of it. I see the waves now, as if I were in mid ocean on board the good barque Sultana in '51." To the same friend he wrote a month later: "I am glad you found something in the Téméraire for all that, — or try to be glad. But when I saw it in print, it saddened me."

in my note-books for years. Longer revolution in my head might round it better, but take it as a meteorolite, splintery still, but with some metallic iridescence here and there brought from some volcanic star. Let it come among poems of sentiment, and as the longest, first if possible."

He was still looking forward at this time to full labors. He had been urged by his publishers to undertake the volume on Hawthorne in the *American Men of Letters* series. He had signified his assent in general, some time before, and seemed now to be deliberately contemplating the task, for he wrote four days after the last: —

"I think there have been one or two volumes published within a few years about *old* Salem. I should be glad to have them sent to me at Southborough. I have one little job of writing to finish, after which I shall revise my poems and prose for a new edition. I don't know whether it be second childhood, but I am beginning to take an interest in them. Then I mean to take up Hawthorne in earnest. . . ."

Before "Heartsease and Rue" was published Lowell had begun the task of setting in order all his writings. With some hesitation he published in the spring of 1888 a volume of "Political Essays," in which he gathered the articles printed in the *Atlantic* and *North American Review* during the stormy war period, but he added as the final number his address on "The Independent in Politics," given in New York, 13 April, 1888. It may be noted that, with no apparent definiteness of pur-

pose, Lowell did in the closing years of his life sum up, in forms which occasions for the most part suggested, his leading principles and doctrines, as if in a series of valedictories. Thus "Democracy" was a confession of his fundamental belief in the region of world-politics; his address at Harvard was the one word on scholarship which at the end of a scholar's life he most wished to say; his address before the Copyright League had touched on points in the great theme of literature which had been of lifelong interest; in his serious poetry, as we have seen, he touched upon those great themes of both worlds which, as a seer of visions all his life, he could not fail to find deepening in his thought; and now he took the opportunity furnished by a friendly audience to set forth some of those principles which had formed his rule of conduct throughout a life that had found active employment in citizenship. There is no lack of definiteness in this address, and yet the period just before its delivery, when he may be supposed to have prepared it, was one of even unwonted depression.

"It is n't pleasant to think one's self a failure at seventy," he wrote 27 March, 1888, "and yet that 's the way it looks to me most of the time. I *can't* do my best. That 's the very torment of it. Why not reconcile one's self with being second-rate? Is n't it better than nothing? No, 't is being nowhere." And on being expostulated with, he wrote again: "It is n't the praise I care for (though of course I should like it as well as Milton did, I suppose), — I mean the praise of others, —

but what I miss is a comfortable feeling of merit in myself. I have never even opened my new book since it was published — I have n't dared."

It would be idle to seek too narrowly for the causes of this despondency. As we have had frequent occasion to note, Lowell all his life was subject to fluctuation of moods. The most comprehensive cause was no doubt in the very constitution of his temperament, and as he was overclouded at times, so for him the sun when it shone was more brilliant than to many. But one asks most anxiously, are such moods superficial or do they trench upon the very citadel of being, sapping and mining the walls, so that if entrance is made, the very heart stops beating. In all the shifting of Lowell's mind there were great fundamental beliefs from which he would not be separated. It may be that in those deepest laid foundations of being, where the bed-rock of faith in spiritual realities is discovered to be a ledge of the rock of ages, Lowell finally, as we have seen, confessed to an ultimate expression of faith, which was that of a child in the dark; but how was it as regards that firm belief in his country which had been a passion with him all his days, and was in truth an elemental faith with him? It is hard to read his last political discourse, "The Place of the Independent in Politics," without a little sense of pain mingled with one's admiration for the serenity of the temper with which Lowell made what was in effect a confession of his political faith; for when one comes to rest his hopes for his country

in the remnant, he confesses almost to as much doubt as confidence. It must of course be remembered that Lowell had given expression to his large faith in democracy in his Birmingham address, and he calls the attention of his audience to this as an explanation of the terms in which he is to address his own countrymen. He might properly use a note of warning among a people whose cardinal doctrine was the democratic principle, and he was justified unquestionably in giving frankly his impressions of the low point to which political organizations had fallen. Still, in undertaking to account for the evolution of the democratic idea in American life, he was questioning whether after all opportunity had not much to do with it, and whether now that the walls were closing about this new country, the force of evolution had not been largely spent. The dangers imminent in the constant inflow of an ignorant body of foreigners, in the easy good-nature with which the American tolerated abuses, and in the aristocratic character of a civil service as diseased as the rotten borough of English politics, — these dangers rose before him, threatening, alarming. He had lost faith largely in the organic action of parties, chiefly because he saw in them the passive instruments of unscrupulous politicians; and he found the correction of this great evil in the increasing power of a neutral body. He even went so far as to find the only hope of salvation in the action of the Independents. "If the attempt should fail," the attempt that is to reform the parties from without,

"the failure of the experiment of democracy would inevitably follow."

This is not the place to discuss the merits of such a question. What I wish is to show the working of Lowell's mind on those political subjects which had occupied him from boyhood. He was consistent throughout in holding lightly to any allegiance to party, and in valuing highly the integrity of the individual conscience, and his plea, gathering force as it proceeds, is for such a spirit of devotion to the great ideals of the country as shall compel the union of like-minded patriots in accomplishing the great active reforms that press upon the minds of thoughtful men.

"What we want," he says in conclusion, "is an active class who will insist in season and out of season that we shall have a country . . . whose very name shall not only, as now it does, stir us as with the sound of a trumpet, but shall call out all that is best within us by offering us the radiant image of something better and nobler and more enduring than we, of something that shall fulfil our own thwarted aspiration, when we are but a handful of forgotten dust in the soil trodden by a race whom we shall have helped to make more worthy of their inheritance than we ourselves had the power, I might almost say the means, to be."

No, Lowell's last word to his countrymen in domestic politics was not one of despair, however it may have been tinged with a sense of temporary defeat. It was because of his strong love that he was jealous of the honor of his country. The sad-

ness is that of one weary in the fight, but the last note, as in the other instances of his valedictories, was a call to action and the reassertion of his undying faith in his country. Yet, as in the other instances, there is the pathetic note of faith in spite of the evidence of sight.

Once again, a little later than this, he was called on to preside at a dinner of the Civil Service Reform Association, and something of what he then said may be quoted as showing how hope and courage came to the front with him when great national issues were in question. "If I am sometimes inclined to fancy," he then said, "as old men will, that the world I see about me is not so pleasant as that on which my eyes first opened, yet I am bound to admit on cross-examining myself, that it is on the whole a better world, better especially in the wider distribution of the civilized and civilizing elements which compose it, better for the increased demands made upon it by those who were once dumb and helpless and for their increasing power to enforce those demands. But every advance in the right direction which I have witnessed has seemed painfully slow. And painfully slow it was, if measured, as we are apt to measure, by the standard of our own little lives, and not, as we should, by that larger life of the community which can afford to wait.

"Every reform like that in which we are interested has to contend with vested interests, and of all vested interests abuses are those which are most adroit in putting a specious gloss on their monopo-

lies and most unscrupulous as to the weapons to be used in their defence. The evil system which we would fain replace with a better has gone on so long that it almost seems part of the order of nature. It is a barbarous and dangerous system. When I was in Spain I saw reason to think that the decay of that noble nation, due, no doubt, to many causes, was due above all to a Civil Service like our own that had gone farther on the inevitable road which ours is going.

"It should seem that a reform like ours, so reasonable, so convenient, so economical, would at once commend itself to the good sense of the people. And I think there are manifest signs that it is more and more so commending itself. The humanity of our day is willing (as our ancestors were not) that the state should support its inefficient members. But did humorist ever conceive a more wasteful way of supporting them than by paying them salaries for performing ill the minor and more mechanical functions of government, thus making this inefficiency costly to every one of us in his daily affairs? Even supposing them capable of becoming efficient, the chances are that, just when they have learned their business, they will be dismissed to make room for other apprentices to pass through the same routine. My own experience has convinced me that not only our social credit, but our business interests have suffered greatly by the theory still more or less prevalent that a man good for nothing else was just the thing for one of the smaller foreign consulates."

CHAPTER XVII

THE LAST YEARS

1888–1891

Lowell went again to England in the spring of 1888, and in June to Bologna, where he was a delegate from Harvard on the occasion of the celebration of the eight hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the University. He received from Bologna the degree of Doctor of Letters. He left London for the continent on Saturday the 9th of June and was back in a week. He had a most uncomfortable experience, being attacked severely by the enemy which now seemed to be always lying in wait for him. He gave an outline of his discomfiture in a letter written to Mr. Norton three weeks after his return to London.

"My gout began in Bologna. It announced itself on Tuesday by an illness which prevented me from venturing out, and so a very pretty speech in Italian which I had in my head remained there to the great loss of mankind. Doctor Weir Mitchell[1] came to me at once on hearing of my disorder, so that I was able to be out next day to receive my degree with the rest. As I walked home from the

[1] Dr. Mitchell likewise received an honorary degree in medicine from the University of Bologna on this occasion.

ceremony I found myself very lame and foreboded what was coming to pass. I got off with Story to Milan by the train leaving Bologna at 1 A. M. I spent Thursday in Milan, where I provided myself with felt slippers, and next day started for London to escape being ill in an Italian inn. I got through the thirty-one hours' journey fairly well with the help of the Glasgow delegates Ramsay and Ferguson, who helped me in every way. I don't think my journey did me any harm. By the time I reached Calais on Saturday I was able to get on my boot again and thought I had got over the worst, but next day I had to resign myself to my sofa, and for ten days was in intense pain. The whole foot in every joint and the ankle were inflamed. For three days the other foot (in the toe joint only) took sides with its mate, and I was discouraged. This, however, passed off, and last Thursday [5 July] I was able to be dressed. Today I have my boots on, though *stropeato*. *Ecce tutte*."

He was in Whitby again in August, living as he liked so well now to do with his books and letters and few friends and the walks which were little more than easy strolls. He wrote to his friend Mrs. Leslie Stephen who was at St. Ives in Cornwall: "I am still pretty lame (do you know I begin to think that I am really seventy at last, and not playing that I am) and can take only short walks. But I hope that the air here will gradually blow the years out of me again. And the fish diet, too, a far more invigorating animal here than in

your sleepy Southern waters which have done nothing but sun themselves and doze since Sir Cloudesley Shovel's days. What are your pilchards when you contrive to catch 'em, and your gurnards (of which latter indeed nothing is left but a petrified head fit only for the table of a geologist that ever I heard of) to our cod and whiting and ling, to speak of no others, with their flesh hardened by constant struggle with our cold Northern waters? Why, your poor fellows have to come all the way hither to catch even a herring, while we have them fresh from the sea every morning. I wish I could send you a few as we know them. And where is your Abbey? We are under the special protection of B. V. Sanctæ Hildæ with the added flavor in our prayers that she was a king's daughter and therefore of our set, and with that sympathy for our special infirmities that comes of knowledge. If you have any saint 't is some fellow with a name you can't pronounce, and who understands nothing but Cornish, whereas Hilda spoke English, as Freeman has proved over and over again."

To Mr. Norton, who had been advising with him on some points in the translation of Dante, he wrote from Whitby: "You put me some pretty stiff conundrums, but I will try. . . . The swoon at the end of the canto (Inferno III.) is a nut too hard for my hammer. I have turned it and tapped it on every corner that seemed hopeful without making so much as a crack in it. Tambernic and Pietrapana might fall on it in vain. I must have expressed myself clumsily in my last letter. I did

not mean to counsel paraphrase in the text, but at foot of page for the help of the Philistine to whom all poetry is a dead language. At best the translation of a poem is a waxen image of the living original, and being too literal is to dress it in the very clothes it wore as if the reality were in them.

"I do not know whether I told you that my last attack of gout had left me more infirm than ever before. I am still lame in both feet, though I insist on walking in the hope of getting limber and because without exercise I can't sleep. We have had disastrous weather here, a cold of Antenora, with fierce winds to drive it in. Even the stones of the Abbey seem to feel it and shudder. I am sitting by a fire as I write. For the first time I begin to think myself capable of growing old.[1]

"I am in the same lodgings as last year, which is a pleasure to me, with kind, simple people, who do all they can to make me happy. They are very like our New England country folk, except in accent, — almost the same thing in fact."

In this letter Lowell intimates one of the physical ills that were attacking him, the loss of sleep. One of his friends and admirers, Canon Stubbs, gave this reminiscence,[2] not long after Lowell's death. "Some years ago," he writes, "I was in the habit of meeting him from time to time at the country house of a common friend. One especial

[1] In a note to me at the same time he wrote: "I begin to examine my cards curiously, expecting to find that of Old Age overlooked in some corner."

[2] *The Westminster Gazette*, 21 August, 1893.

evening — a 'golden night of memory' — I shall never forget. After dinner one of the guests asked Lowell to read one of his own poems. This request he playfully put aside, but he began to talk to us about Wordsworth, and read to us part of the 'Laodamia,' commenting, as he read, much I confess to my surprise, on the narrowness and limited experience of Wordsworth, and the one-sided development of his intellectual powers. Then some chance expression turned the current of his talk, and he began describing, with all the quaint humor and delightful raillery of which he was so complete a master, a special antidote to sleeplessness which he said he had himself lately devised, — the invention of new chapters in Cæsar's Commentaries on the Gallic War. I wish I could remember the chapter which he then recited. The aptness of the Latin phraseology was irresistibly funny. It told 'how Vercingetorix and his army, retreating before Cæsar, had taken refuge on a high, rocky hill, strongly fortified and precipitous on every side, from which at first Cæsar had despaired of dislodging him without a long siege. But while Cæsar was considering these things an opportunity of acting successfully seemed to offer. He noticed a fissure in the rock, which on investigation by night was discovered to pierce the hill from side to side. [Here we expected the anachronism of dynamite or gunpowder. But no; Lowell more justly appreciated the natural genius of Cæsar.] Knowing that the winter was now nigh at hand, Cæsar ordered two legions of soldiers

to block up with clay and twisted willow work the opposite ends of the rocky cleft, and then, having filled the chasm with water, to await the issue. That night the frost came; the water expanded; the high rock was cleft asunder; and down came Vercingetorix and his army. For this success' — Lowell concluded — 'a supplication of twenty days was decreed by the Senate upon receiving Cæsar's letter.' "

After a visit to St. Ives, Lowell returned to London and remained there till the middle of November. His friends the Misses Lawrence were at Wildbad. As he never quite finished his couplets to Mrs. Gilder, so he never quite exhausted the playful names he gave these two ladies. "O Giminy," he wrote from London, 1 October "(for I have exhausted all other ways of expressing your twinship in my affection, and any opening exclamation will suit the context), O Giminy, I say, how can you be happy in a hotel that Klumpps with a double p like a man with a club foot, and in a town which, by its own confession, is both wild and bad? What are you doing there? Taking the baths? You can't soak the goodness out of you, if you try never so hard, that's one comfort. You 'admired the traces of the Romans at Treves' did you? Pray, did you see the Holy Coat? *That* is what the place is famous for, bless your innocent souls. And then your single room at Munich with '2 or 3 Bismarcks, as many Gladstones and Döllingers' in it. Do you expect me to believe *that?* It would have been uninhabitable had there been

only one apiece of them, and you know it. You trifle with my understanding. Smoky London, indeed! The sky to-day is like a gigantic blue bell tipped over to pour out the sunshine it cannot contain. And the town is emptily delightful and one does not see a soul one knows from one end of the week to t' other. I should n't mind its being fuller by a dozen or so, my Ambidue among them. Indeed, I was thinking yesterday of writing to ask where you were and when you were coming back to the lovers who (all but one of them) make me so jealous. The middle of October seems a great way off to that single inoffensive one, but 't is better than nothing. I shall be here till the middle of November, and you will let me know the moment you come, won't you?

"I have n't the least notion where Wildbad is, and you give no geographical details, so I don't feel sure that this will ever reach the Hôtel Klumpppppp though there can't be two of that name even in this most patient of worlds. Did Wagner ever set it to music? Methinks 't would have suited his emphatic and somewhat halting genius. But I shall try for a guide-book, and if this never reaches you, I shall be consoled with thinking that you will never know how little you have lost.

"I am very well, almost as well as before my gout; but I am rather dull, as you were just saying to each other. However, your return will brighten me, and you shall take me to the play and the opera and Madame Tussaud's just as often as you

please. And I invite myself to dine with you too — I mean two. Am I not generous? The nearer I get to the end of my sheet (like a prisoner escaping and doubtful where he was going to drop) the more I wonder where Wildbad is. I shall ask at a foreign book-shop. That is the simplest plan, for they are all kept by German Jews who know every place where Christians are plundered the world over. And if a Bad of any kind does not come within that definition I am greatly mistaken. My only doubt would be as to whether you were Christians? Well, you have always treated me as if you were. Good-by."

Lowell spent a night at Chester with Mr. Hughes and sailed from Liverpool 22 November. He spent the winter of 1888–1889 at his sister's, Mrs. Putnam's, in Boston. He found himself physically depressed and disinclined to any effort. A hasty acceptance of an invitation to lecture in Philadelphia brought him intolerable discomfort, and he begged to be let off, if it could be done without prejudice to his hosts. "It is absurd," he wrote, "but I was made so. I won't torment myself by speaking in public any more. With any such engagement on my mind, I can do nothing else, and indeed do nothing but think about that." Dr. Mitchell at once released him, and Lowell wrote in reply, 27 December, 1888: "I got your welcome letter last evening, and when I first looked in the glass this morning I was pleased to find my hair less gray than when I went to bed. You never wrote a better prescription. My mind has been

relieved of what really seemed to me an intolerable weight, for, whether it be from old age or whatever cause, I have been undoubtedly inert both in body and mind since my attack of gout last summer." On the same day he wrote to Mr. Gilder: "Many thanks for your welcome home. I am miserably dumpy, thank you, with the remains of my tedious fit of gout last summer, which continues to hold my frontier posts as the British did ours after the treaty of 1783. But I hope to go on to Washington early in February in time to get back for my seventieth birthday, which I can't spend in the tents of Kedar."

Lowell's visit to Philadelphia and Washington is pleasantly reflected in his letters. His son-in-law, Mr. Burnett, was at that time a member of the House of Representatives, and Lowell, though he expressed a fear lest his lion's mane should blow off, was entertained agreeably and came away with an admiration for many of the public men he met. His seventieth birthday came shortly after his return to Boston, when he was given a dinner at the Tavern Club over which Mr. Norton presided. "I was listening to my own praises for two hours last night," he wrote to Mrs. Fields, "and have hardly got used to the discovery of how great a man I am." He heard these praises again in a more public way when the *Critic* of New York made its number for 23 February a "Lowell birthday number," having collected warm tributes of affection and admiration from seventy men and women of note in America and England. By an

ingenious alphabetical arrangement the editor displayed his letters from Y to A, the astronomer Young heading the list and the poet Aldrich closing it. The English names naturally were fewer in number, but they included Tennyson and his son, Gladstone, Lord Coleridge, Lang, Locker-Lampson, and Palgrave; amongst his own countrymen were those yet his seniors, Holmes, Whittier, Mrs. Stowe, the elder Furness, and President Barnard, while the poet Parsons born in the same year and a host of juniors joined in the chorus of loving praise. As Dr. Horace Howard Furness truly said: "It is no small tribute, in itself, to Mr. Lowell that we should all be thus ready to praise him to his face."

Lowell had set the date for his annual pilgrimage to England at 27 April, but a pressing invitation to speak on the 30th of that month at the great celebration in New York of the hundredth anniversary of Washington's inauguration as first president, which he tried in vain to decline, compelled him to postpone his departure for nearly a month. Meanwhile he worked somewhat fitfully at literature, belabored as he was with letters and social distractions. Mr. Aldrich asked him to write for the *Atlantic* a paper on John Bright, who had just died. At first he thought he could write it, but a fortnight later he wrote: "There is no use in trying. Cold molasses is swift as a weaver's shuttle compared with my wits. I have essayed every side of the subject like a beetle in a tumbler and find myself on my back after each

attempt. So you must let me give it up." It was characteristic of his unfailing interest in all genuine literature, new or old, that he should at the same time have written to Mr. Aldrich his pleasure in a poem, "Deaths in April," in the current *Atlantic*. "Too intricate and even obscure I thought it here and there, but perhaps the intricacy is of forest-boughs and the obscurity nothing more than the gloom which they teach light to counterfeit. Never mind, 't is the Muses' utterance." [1]

The special piece of writing which did occupy him for awhile, an introduction to Isaak Walton's "Complete Angler," may fairly be called one of the happiest of his literary appreciations. He writes, to be sure, to Dr. Mitchell that he is "thoroughly fagged" with the work, but to the unsuspecting reader who comes upon it in the volume of Lowell's "Latest Literary Essays and Addresses" there is the sense only of a quieter tone than he finds in the Gray, for example, in the same volume. There is no lack of acuteness, rather one is struck with the delicacy of the criticism, but the special charm is in the delight which Lowell takes in his sunny-tempered author. It is as if he had been thoroughly fagged when he took Walton down and as he read the "Lives" and the "Complete Angler" was drawn within the cheerful mind of Walton and warmed himself at the open fire of his charity. The paper has the value one finds so often in Lowell's writings, of reflecting the writer's mood, and one who has followed Lowell into the

[1] The poem was by Mr. Bliss Carman.

recesses of his consciousness of age can scarcely fail to bear him company when he finds him writing of Walton: "But what justifies and ennobles these lower loves (of music, painting, good ale, and a pipe), what gives him a special and native aroma like that of Alexander, is that above all he loved the beauty of holiness and those ways of taking and of spending life that make it wholesome for ourselves and our fellows. His view of the world is not of the widest, but it is the Delectable Mountains that bound the prospect. Never surely was there a more lovable man, nor one to whom love found access by more avenues of sympathy."

The after-dinner speech for which Lowell consented to postpone his summer journey to England was in response to the toast "Our Literature." The speech appears as the last piece of literature which Lowell published in his collected writings, and it is a coincidence that this should stand at the end of his career, when at the beginning, if we may, not unnaturally, count *The Pioneer* as his formal bow in the profession of letters, stood the announcement of his outlook on national literature. Nearly forty-seven years lie between the two deliverances. As a young man of twenty-three he scouted the idea of an artificial division between the literature of America and that of England, he deprecated the too close dependence upon the current judgments of English writers for the press, and he pleaded eagerly for a natural literature in America, the free reflection of a free people. Now, with the reflection of age he considers in his brief

space those fundamental principles which make for the endurance of a national literature, — the right sense of proportion between things material and things spiritual, the necessity of inviolable standards, the dependence upon the whole literature of the world. His last word is a word of hope, as was befitting a prophet of literature, standing at the end of the first century of a nation's life, as years are measured from the consciousness of existence.

"The literature of a people should be the record of its joys and sorrows, its aspirations and its shortcomings, its wisdom and its folly, the confidant of its soul. We cannot say that our own as yet suffices us, but I believe that he who stands a hundred years hence where I am standing now, conscious that he speaks to the most powerful and prosperous community ever devised or developed by man, will speak of our literature with the assurance of one who beholds what we hope for and aspire after become a reality and a possession forever."

Lowell sailed for England 18 May, 1889, and spent five months there at his customary haunts in London and in Whitby, revisiting his old friends and preferring the intimate associations to the social functions. "You ask me so many things," he writes to Mrs. Clifford from Radnor Place, 17 June, "in such a breathless way — all of them disparate, and some of them desperate — that I know not which way to turn. Besides, have n't you con-

fessed that you set springes in your notes? And how can I tell but that every ? is a springe (they look like it), and that I may not find myself dangling like an unwary hare with no chance ever to put my foot into anything again? However, I will tread cautiously and give each of 'em a little preliminary shake to see if there be any mischief in 'em.

"1st. Will I come to tea Thursday? I turn it over gingerly — it lies quite still and does n't seem likely to go off with a jerk. I think it harmless and answer 'yes.' I don't like the artist being there with her pictures, for that may incur me the expense of several fibs, and I am not sure how many I have left.

"2d. Do I know Miss ——? This looks more suspicious and I give it a wide berth.

"3d. Have I read 'A Conversation in a Balcony'? Here I seem safe enough because I have n't. So I reply boldly, 'I have sent for it and will read it.'

"4th. Will I take your head off? This is a specific proposition and therefore less likely to have any *dolus* hidden in it, and you offer me a prodigious bribe. But no, I won't! I have a better opinion of your top-piece than you have (for the moment), and think it more useful and becoming where it is. Moreover, there was never head heard of that looked well after it was off except Charlotte Corday's, and this is worth your consideration, and I am sure (since you are a woman) will have it. So we will wait. But I will come Thursday."

There is a playfulness about all Lowell's letters during this last summer he was to spend in England, a pleasure in little things, as in his walks and encounters, and a deep draught of delight in the sea. His month at Whitby lengthened to six weeks, and he was reluctant to leave this secluded corner. Here he read Dante and Milton, Lope de Vega and Calderon, Byron, and some old French texts. He felt uncommonly well, and he even wrote a poem, "The Brook," for which the *New York Ledger* had offered a generous sum.

When Lowell returned to America he went back to Elmwood. Mrs. Burnett had arranged to return with her children and make a home there for her father, and it was with a long sigh of content that he settled himself in a place which was endeared to him by lifelong attachment. Yet it was with some discomposure that he looked upon the changes going on in the neighborhood. The village of Cambridge had long ago become a city, though still retaining a lingering village air, but now houses were creeping toward the confines of the town and filling those great empty spaces which had given him the sense of delightful roominess. He was a genuine conservative as regards places, and no doubt his English residence had confirmed his conviction that it was well to strike root deeply in planting the family, which is the greatest conservative force. A few years before, when he was minister to England, I brought him news of the neighborhood, and his brow clouded as I reported the rumor that more horse-car tracks

were to be laid near Elmwood. "I never, never will go back there to live," he declared vehemently, "if they make these inroads on my place." He had been forced to reduce the area of the estate as it was in his father's day and his youth, but he was jealous of any further encroachment on the integrity of his little patch of land, and in a world of change about him clung tenaciously to his foothold.

During the winter of 1889–1890 Lowell occupied himself with preparing a uniform edition of his writings, and answered one or two of the applications he had for poems or papers. His own needs were few, he lived simply, and he was under no stress of necessity, but he was eager to turn over with increment the little estate he had to his daughter and her children. Mr. Howells had interested himself in procuring a poem from Lowell for *Harper's Monthly*, for which a liberal sum was paid, and Lowell, when the transaction was over, wrote him: "I happened to want the money, and though one cannot write a poem for money, one is glad to get what one can for it once written. You partly know how it is with me. My heart's desire is to leave Mabel as independent as I can, and what I leave will, at best, hardly go round among so many. Now I had got myself into a place where I could not keep certain promises I had made without encroaching on my principal. Your benefice will just tide me over. The sacredness of my little pile has become almost a cult with me."

In preparing his writings for a new definitive edition, Lowell did much more than merely see to an orderly arrangement. He took great pains with his prose, going over his various papers with care, and tucking in new sentences, or erasing sentences he did not like. He did not meddle much with his poetry; he wished indeed he might get rid of some of his juvenilia, and it was suggested that he should dismiss them to the back-yard of an Appendix. The question was raised if it would be well to date his poems, for the student of literature rightly values the opportunity of marking development in the author he is at work on, but the objection was made that such dating coming from him would be authoritative, and would give sanction to those publishers who lined the legal fence and were ready to seize upon an author's work the moment it was technically out of copyright, whether the author were living or not, and whether he and his family still had an interest in an undisturbed possession. It was in answer to all this that he wrote me: "*Manet litera scripta* is a law which might have given points to that of the Medes and Persians. There is no good in squirming. If one could only learn it early enough! I must bear my penalty. I must march through Coventry with my tatterdemalions, whether I like it or not. As for dates, as I have never kept copies of my books (in some of which dates were given), I could not hunt them down without more trouble than it is worth. I had not thought of the bucaneer (I leave out one intrusive *c*) objection till you sug-

gested it. It is enough. Let them go hang! — both dates and bucaneers. And my Lord Chief Justice Holt (was n't it he who first made the unrighteous distinction between the property of authors and that of their worsers?), let him swing amidst of 'em! This settles the Appendix."

Lowell loved the minutiæ of verbal criticism. It was part of his jealousy for the purity of the language, and meant that touch which the artist gives. Slovenliness was his abhorrence, and free as he was with the vernacular, he made a clear distinction between the undress and the dress occasions of speech. I transmitted to him at this time a criticism which took him to task for the use of the form "try and." He replied: "I am much obliged to Mr. —— for his friendly interest in my English. The phrase 'try and,' like 'come and,' is to some extent conversational, but it is idiomatic. There is plenty of authority for it. Here is one from Thackeray, who uses it often: —

"'Don't they try and pass off their ordinary-looking girls? &c.'[1]

"You will observe that in the passage criticised by Mr. —— I am supposing another person to speak, and therefore made it purposely familiar. 'Come and' occurs in the first motto of the Bay Colony: 'Come over and help us' — from the Bible, 'Come over into Macedonia, and help us.' Matthew Arnold uses it, and I think it is in Shakespeare also."

In the spring of 1890 Lowell suffered from what

[1] "Small-Beer Chronicle," in *Roundabout Papers*.

he called "the first severe illness of my life." It proved indeed to be the beginning of the end. For six weeks he kept his bed, and when he was able at last to crawl about, his physician forbade even the briefest journey. He had been asked to give an address in Vermont, and he was obliged to write: "I am not yet allowed even to drive out or to use my legs except in loitering about my own grounds. So you see that Castleton is as impossible to me as Mecca. . . . Let me add that I have a special partiality for Vermont as the New England State which maintains most persistently our best traditions."

To Mr. Godkin he wrote, 29 April: "I have had rather a hard time of it, and for a day or two Wyman had fears. The acute symptoms ceased a month ago, and I am now doing well, but my malady has somewhat demoralized me and I must consent to be an invalid for a good while yet. 'T is my first experience and I don't like it. Moralists tell us that pain is for our good, but even the gout has failed to make me think so, and this was even harder to bear." But he had been amusing himself with some verses on "infant industries" which he sent in this letter, giving them the title, "The New Septimius Felton." They were printed in the *Nation* with the title, "The Infant Prodigy."

On the second of May he wrote from Elmwood to Mr. Gilder, who was to give the poem that year before Φ. B. K. in Cambridge: "You may be sure that I shall support you with my sympathetic presence at Φ. B. K. if my legs will by that time sup-

port me, as I have now every reason to think they will. I made an excursion to Cambridge (by horse-car) yesterday, my first adventure of the kind for fourteen weeks, and am none the worse for it."

Of course a summer in England was out of the question, and Mr. Leslie Stephen, one of the friends who made so large a part of an English summer to Lowell, came instead to America to see Lowell once more in his home. There he found him amongst his books and with the squirrels gambolling outside, but the days of long walks were over, and even the social pleasures which Lowell could share with his guest were few and simple.

He saw the completion of the revision of his writings, and the ten comely volumes standing all a-row were a fair evidence to him that he was not so indolent as he was wont to call himself. His malady left him little power for any continuous work, but he wrote the introduction to a reprint of the first edition of Milton's "Areopagitica," a brief paper on Parkman for the *Century Magazine*, and a trifle for the Contributors' Club in the *Atlantic Monthly*. It may be that he glanced at the six volumes of his own prose when he wrote of Milton: "He must have known, if any ever knew, that even in the 'sermo pedestris' there are yet great differences in gait, that prose is governed by laws of modulation as exact, if not so exacting, as those of verse, and that it may conjure with words as prevailingly. The music is secreted in it, yet often more potent in suggestion than that of any

verse which is not of utmost mastery." And then follows a brief sentence which has in it the very charm he is praising. "We hearken after it as to a choir in the side chapel of some cathedral heard faintly and fitfully across the long desert of the nave, now pursuing and overtaking the cadences, only to have them grow doubtful again and elude the ear before it has ceased to throb with them."

It was characteristic of him that he should write to Mr. Gilder: " . . . Now what I wish to know is, how soon do you want the Parkman? I have just had an offer of a thousand dollars for a short paper of reminiscences, and I think I might make something that would at least *do*, out of my boyhood. I want the money — I always do, more 's the pity, but I want it particularly just now that I may help a friend who is in straits. May I write this first? The Parkman is more than half done, and all thought out." Plenty of money lay within Lowell's grasp if he would sell his name and a few hours of work, but he never had been able to make merchandise of his art, and it cost him an effort, when he was asked to name a price, to cast his name into the balance. His publishers, finding him putting off the volume on Hawthorne, held out the promise of a very liberal payment as soon as they could have the book, but he did not get beyond the preliminary business of re-reading his author. Yet the needs of a friend offered the requisite stimulus.

The article in the Contributors' Club was a humorous defence of certain American locutions and

forms of spelling against half-learned objections. It was a return to a favorite theme and contains an amusing sketch of a proof-reader whom we take to be his old friend Mr. George Nichols. The club is in a vein which naturally assumes a half antique manner, and the treatment shows that smiling acceptance of the prejudices of learning which is the scholar's defence against the logic of the pedant. Even this trifle, unsigned, and inconspicuous in its setting, could not get printed finally without two or three hurried notes from its author, amending and adding to it, and the last proofs were returned with a sigh: "I thought the thing livelier than I find it — it kicked so lustily in the womb. But nothing is good after 't is born!"

If Lowell was growing old, so also were others with whom he had had lifelong associations. Whittier was twelve years his senior, and though all his life an invalid, never lost his singing voice, and Lowell wrote him, 16 December, 1890: —

Dear Friend Whittier, — I had meant to write you a word of thanks for your "Captain's Well" [in the *New York Ledger*], but that with some other good intentions was hindered of fruition by my illness. It seemed to me in your happiest vein — a vein peculiarly your own. Tears came into my eyes as I read it.

Since I could not write then, I do it now to wish you and all of us many happy returns of your birthday. It is partly a selfish wish, for the world will seem a worse world to me when you

have left it, but it is not wholly so. The universal love and honor which attend you, and in which I heartily join, are of excellent example, and it is well that you should live long to enjoy them.

Faithfully yours,

J. R. Lowell.

Dedications, those shy birds, came fluttering about Lowell in these days. One was in an anonymous volume of verse from a friend dear for her own sake and her mother's. It had come to him in manuscript first and then revised. When it came first, he wrote: "I am perfectly satisfied with the dedication — how should I not be? But how, in any case, could I look such a gift horse in the mouth? I should like it *quand même* as a proof of your affection, for that is the main thing; 'Only, only call me dear!'" and two days later, when an alternate form came: "Yes, I like this better. I could not have discussed what you should say in such a case, but you have shown your woman's wit (as I thought you would) in divining what I stole from Coleridge and he from Lessing."

Dr. Weir Mitchell inscribed to him his volume "A Psalm of Death and other Poems," and Lowell acknowledged the honor: "I am very proud of my book. You know how in the tray for visiting cards those of the more socially distinguished drift to the top (by a kind of natural selection) where they may be better seen of such, and so your volume lies conspicuously on my table by some happy

chance, that everybody who comes to see me is sure also to pick it up and look at it. I read it through as soon as I got it and with entire satisfaction. Without partiality I like it better than any of its predecessors, and I have told you how much I like *them*. Your touch, I think, is more assured, and the slag more thoroughly worked out of the ore. I shan't tell you which I like best any more than I should think of showing any preference among my grandchildren, though I am conscious that I obscurely feel something of the kind. Without indelicacy, however, I may mention a favorite passage. It occurs on the leaf following the title-page, and seemed to me every way admirable. It will be a treasure to me so long as I live. I have had no sharp attack since the middle of November, but for the last three weeks have been in so wretched a valetudinarian way that Mabel has called in Wyman again. I am beginning to think 't is Old Age after all. I fancy I know how a bear feels during hibernation when he is getting near the end of his fast."

A fortnight after this Lowell wrote again of himself, to his friends the Misses Lawrence: "I ought to have written long ago to thank you for your dear remembrance of me at Christmas. It was not ingratitude but sheer unconsciousness of the goings on of Time. I have been a wretched valetudinarian, and the days dribble away from me ere I am aware. I don't mean that I have been seriously ill again; but I don't get strong and seem in a lethargy half the time. However, I still reckon

on the approaching visit of Doctor Spring, whose prescriptions have always done me good. They are simple enough, — birds and bees and things, — but they do wonders for me. My great bother now is that the least exertion tires me. Yet I believe I am as happy as most men. At any rate, I have had my share. You have been a part of it, and I have you still, thanks to your persistent kindness.

"We have had a better winter than you (thanks to our admirable form of government), but more snow than for several years. This has made the roads merry with sleighs. I myself have been out in a sleigh two or three times and enjoyed it in a quiet way. To-day it is raining and eating away the snow very fast. . . . Spite of your crusty winter I should have been glad to share it with you. I am so true a lover that I love my London even in the sulks. 'T is the best place for dwelling in the world except this house where I was born."

Not long after Lowell began his work at Harvard, he came into his class-room one day, and before giving his regular lecture, spoke to his students a few pointed words regarding Dr. Henry Ware Wales, who had recently died, and whose name is perpetuated in the University by the books he gave and by the Sanscrit professorship which he founded. Dr. Wales had been his friend from boyhood, and Lowell spoke kindly and touchingly of his amiability and generosity; but then he passed to a graver theme suggested by the superb courage with which his friend faced Death. As one reads these passages in connection with Low-

ell's own final experience, one cannot fail to hear almost a prophetic voice. Little stress has been laid in these pages on the keen suffering which marked the closing months of Lowell's life, but suffering there was, almost unbearable. Above this physical pain, however, rose the courageous spirit which does not lose itself in vain murmurings. Something of his cheerful encounter with death appears in his letters, and he made light to his friends of his pain; but the physicians who attended him knew through what he was passing.[1] Hear then how he spoke of Dr. Wales thirty-five years earlier, when he himself was in full vigor.

"I saw him frequently in Rome a few months before his death, and I can speak from my own knowledge. Just before coming to Rome, I had been reading over the Philoctetes of Sophocles, little thinking that I was so soon to find the story of that hero acted over again under my eyes by a coeval and friend. Like Philoctetes, his grievous wound was in a single limb, or rather in a single joint — and yet there he lay, otherwise a strong man, utterly helpless, and hopeful only of that release which comes to all. His island of Lemnos was the bed from which he could not rise. He was perfectly aware of his situation. He had studied medicine, and knew that his death warrant was signed. And here it was that he showed a

[1] An examination made after Lowell's death showed that the bleeding with which the sickness began eighteen months or more previously was the first step in the course of the growth of a cancer of the kidney. The disease had extended to the liver, and at the last to the lungs.

courage and a firmness which were truly heroic. He told me that he had no hope, that he saw death approaching, and I shall never forget the expression of his face as he said it. He looked into the distance as if he literally saw the messenger of his doom, and measured him with a fearless and unquailing eye, as a braver man measures an antagonist. He spoke alike without levity and without selfish sentimentality. He did not wish to die, nor did he pretend it, but like a true man he fronted Death like an equal, advanced to meet him cheerfully, and did not wait to be dragged to his door like a culprit. I have stood on many battlefields, but here I was present at the battle itself. I saw what the ancients declared the noblest prospect for human eyes, — at once the noblest and most tragic, — a brave man meeting Fate. For it was Fate, — the wound was apparently a trifling one, but the arrow was poisoned. There was no escape.

" Rome was at its gayest, and he knew it. The great Easter throng was gathered before St. Peter's to receive the blessing of him whom his subjects curse. The great dome shone with that illumination so beautiful that one might almost rank it as a new constellation suddenly created upon the purple evening sky of Italy. And all the while he lay there chained — suffering pains which no opiate could entirely deaden — and uttered no complaint, nay, was cheerful. And now it was that his studies stood him in good stead. As he had been faithful to virtue and honorable aims, so were they now not unfaithful to him. He felt the truth

upon his sleepless pillow of Cicero's *pernoctant nobis*. Those invisible visitants that thronged his chamber came not with faces of reproach, but with countenances of hope and consolation, on which truly the light of Easter morning, of the Resurrection, was shining.

"It is proverbial that all men die game. But it was not the mere act of dying which tried his courage and serenity. It was the lying in prison under sentence of Death, and it was the prison of the Inquisition, too, where he was hourly tortured.

"It is not, then, as our benefactor, it is not as my schoolmate, classmate, and the friend of nearly twenty-five years, it is not merely as the scholar, that I feel impelled to commemorate him here. It is as an example of how refined studies refine and elevate the character, how they give a vantage ground impregnable to chance and pain and death; it is as the heroic man, quietly and without hope of fame or credit, fighting the good fight in that single combat in which any one of us at any time may be compelled to take up the gauntlet of that foe who fights with enchanted weapons, against which there is no hope.

> "He is now dead and nailed in his chest.
> I pray to God to give his soul good rest."

The spring of 1891 came and Lowell had cheerful hope of further work. He had not dismissed literature because he had collected his writings into a series of books. He meant to write more, to bring together more scattered papers for a volume and to

make at least one more collection of his poems. Meanwhile he read — his books were close at hand and his constant friends. He re-read Boswell's Johnson for the fourth time, and he read the recently published full diary of Walter Scott. He took up novel reading, rather a new taste, and amused himself with contemporaneous society in England as depicted by Norris. At Mr. Bartlett's suggestion, the whist club to which he had been so faithful held one more meeting which he made out to attend. But though he could go out but little, he had a pleasant glimpse of the world that lay about his house, — the earliest and the best known world to him. He had had a flat dish with stones in it conveniently placed in his garden, and connected it with his water pipe so that his little friends the thrushes, the orioles, and squirrels might have free use of the modern improvements to which he was indifferent enough.[1] Outside of his bedroom window a pair of gray squirrels had nested, and as he was imprisoned there by the illness which now closed in about him, he looked with kindly interest on their gambols in the tree-tops. His friends came as he could see them, and he entertained them with humorous diatribes on his gaoler gout. Now and then he could pencil a letter or note, sending a message perhaps to some equally bound sufferer, as when he commiserated his old friend Judge Hoar, shut up with an attack of inflammatory rheumatism, and whimsically cautioned

[1] See an interesting note by W. J. Stillman in the *Spectator*, 1 July, 1899.

him against mistaking it for the gout which he himself was enduring. A faint smile plays about these last expressions of his kindly nature, as he seems to wave the world aside that he may take his friends by the hand. Death found him cheerful, and he passed away in the middle of the bright summer.

APPENDIX

A. THE LOWELL ANCESTRY

I. *Paternal.*[1]

1. The first American ancestor of the Massachusetts Lowells was Perceval Lowell, written also Lowle, who came from Somersetshire, England, in 1639, when he was 68 years old, and was one of the early settlers of Newbury, Mass., which was organized in 1642. He wrote a poem on the death of Governor Winthrop, and died in Newbury, 8 January, 166$\frac{4}{5}$.

2. Perceval Lowell brought with him to America two sons, John and Richard, and a daughter Joan. John, the elder brother, was made a Freeman in 1641; he was a deputy from Newbury to the General Court in 1643–1644. He died in Newbury in 1647, aged 52 years.

3. His son John was born in England, and came to America when he was ten years old, with his father and grandfather. He was a cooper by trade, and made his home first in Boston and then in Scituate. He was thrice married, the third time to Naomi Sylvester, a sister of his second wife; he moved later to Rehoboth, Mass., but finally returned to Boston, where he died 7 June, 1694. He had nineteen children in all.

4. Ebenezer Lowell, fifteenth son of John Lowell,

[1] For these details I am indebted to statements made by Mrs. Mary Lowell Putnam and to *The Historic Genealogy of the Lowells of America from 1639 to 1899.* Compiled and edited by Delmar R. Lowell.

his mother being Naomi [Sylvester] Lowell, was born in Boston in 1675, and married in 1694 Elizabeth Shailer. He was a cordwainer, which sounds more dignified than shoemaker, and died in Boston, 10 September, 1711.

5. John Lowell, son of Ebenezer and Elizabeth [Shailer] Lowell, was born in Boston, 14 March, 170$\frac{3}{4}$. He was graduated from Harvard in 1721, and married Sarah, daughter of Noah and Sarah [Turell] Champney, 23 December, 1725. On 19 January, 1726, he was ordained pastor of the Third Parish in Newbury, which became the First Parish in Newburyport, when under that name the part of Newbury up to that time designated the Waterside was set off as a separate township in 1764. Mrs. Lowell died in 1756, and the Rev. John Lowell married again in 1758 Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Cutts, Jr., and widow of the Rev. Joseph Whipple. The Rev. John Lowell died in Newburyport, 15 May, 1767.

6. John, son of John and Sarah [Champney] Lowell, was born in Newbury, 17 June, 1743. He took his bachelor's degree at Harvard in 1760, and under the arrangement of those days, which recorded the members of a class in order of social dignity, he was seventh in a class of twenty-seven. He studied law in Boston with Oxenbridge Thacher [H. U. 1698], and was admitted to practice in 1763. He returned to his native town and at once became prominent in public affairs. In 1767 he drew up a report upon a letter from the selectmen of Boston concerning the measures to be taken to frustrate the encroachments of Great Britain. He served for several years as one of the selectmen of Newburyport, and in May, 1776, was one of the five representatives of the town in the General Court. He

removed to Boston in 1777, and the next year was chosen a representative to the General Court from Boston. In 1779 he was elected a member of the convention for framing the constitution of the State. In 1781 he was chosen a delegate to the Continental Congress. In 1782 he was appointed by Congress one of the three judges of the newly created Admiralty court of appeals. In 1784 he was one of the commissioners to establish the boundary line between Massachusetts and New York. On the adoption of the constitution of the United States, President Washington appointed him Judge of the U. S. District Court in Massachusetts. In 1801 he was appointed Chief Justice of the Circuit Court for the first circuit, under the new organization of the judiciary.

He married, in 1767, Sarah, daughter of Stephen and Elizabeth [Cabot] Higginson, and had by her three children, Anna Cabot, John, and Sarah Champney. His wife, Sarah, died 5 May, 1772, and he married again, 31 May, 1774, Susanna, daughter of Francis and Mary [Fitch] Cabot, by whom he had two children, Francis Cabot, founder of the factory system in Lowell, and Susanna. His second wife, Susanna, died 30 March, 1777, and he married a third time Rebecca, daughter of James and Katharine [Graves] Russell, of Charlestown, and widow of James Tyng, of Dunstable, Mass. By her he had four children, Rebecca Russell, Charles, Elizabeth Cutts, and Mary. He died in Roxbury, Mass., 6 May, 1802.

He was for eighteen years a member of the corporation of Harvard College, and was one of the founders of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His son, the Rev. Charles Lowell, stated: "My father introduced into the Bill of Rights the clause by which slavery was

abolished in Massachusetts. My father advocated its adoption in the convention, and when it was adopted, exclaimed: 'Now there is no longer slavery in Massachusetts; it is abolished and I will render my services as a lawyer gratis to any slave suing for his freedom if it is withheld from him,' or words to that effect."

7. Charles Lowell, son of John and Rebecca [Russell] Lowell, was born in Boston, 15 August, 1782. He was graduated from Harvard College in 1800, travelled in Europe 1802–1805, and on his return to Boston was made pastor of the West Congregational Church in that town, and remained its pastor, either active or emeritus, till he died. He was married, 2 October, 1806, to Harriet Brackett, daughter of Keith and Mary [Traill] Spence. He was elected a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1815, and was its recording Secretary from 1818 to 1833, and corresponding Secretary from 1833 to 1849. He was stricken with partial paralysis in the autumn of 1851, and died 20 January, 1861.

The children of Charles and Harriet Traill [Spence] Lowell, were

1. Charles Russell, born 30 October, 1807; he married Anna Cabot Jackson, 18 April, 1832, and died 23 June, 1870; their children were
    i. Anna Cabot Jackson, married to Dr. Henry Elisha Woodbury.
    ii. Charles Russell, Jr., commissioned Brigadier General, who died 20 October, 1864, from wounds received at the battle of Cedar Creek.
    iii. Harriet, married to George Putnam.
    iv. James Jackson, commissioned first lieutenant, 20 Massachusetts Volunteers, and

died 4 July, 1862, from wounds received at Glendale, Va., five days previous.

2. Rebecca Russell, born 17 January, 1809; died, unmarried, 20 May, 1872.
3. Mary Traill Spence, born 3 December, 1810, died 1 June, 1898; she married, 25 April, 1832, Samuel Raymond Putnam, and their children were —
   i. Alfred Lowell Putnam.
   ii. Georgina Lowell Putnam.
   iii. William Lowell Putnam, who was commissioned 10 July, 1861, 2d lieutenant, 20th Massachusetts Volunteers, and was killed in the battle of Ball's Bluff, 21 October, 1861.
   iv. Charles Lowell Putnam.
4. William Keith Spence, born 23 September, 1813; died 12 February, 1823.
5. Robert Traill Spence, born 8 October, 1816, died 12 September, 1891; he married Marianna Duane, 28 October, 1845, and their children were —
   i. Harriet Brackett Spence.
   ii. Marianna.
   iii. Percival.
   iv. James Duane.
   v. Charles.
   vi. Rebecca Russell.
   vii. Robert Traill Spence, Jr.
6. James Russell, born 22 February, 1819; died 12 August, 1891.

When the Rev. Delmar R. Lowell was collecting material for *The Historic Genealogy of the Lowells of America*, he had for use two letters from Lowell, which he has printed in facsimile in his volume, and kindly permits me to copy.

Elmwood, 12 July, 1875.

Dear Sir, — Whether Coffin was right in making Ebenezer born in 1685 or no, I cannot say, but Rev. John L. of Newbury was son of *an* Ebenezer, and I doubt if there were two contemporaneous with each other. This John — my great-grandfather, can hardly have doubted his descent from Perceval, since I have books from his library in which he spells his name Lowle; and I have always understood that a silver seal of arms (in my brother's possession) came from him. My father (as you rightly suppose) had more knowledge on this point than any one else, but I fear he never made any written record of it. If I should find any such, I shall gladly communicate it to you. That you and I are kinsmen I have never doubted since I had the pleasure of seeing you some thirty odd years ago; when I was struck with your likeness to the portrait of my ancestor, the Rev. John of Newbury. As he graduated in 1721, his father *must* have been born earlier than 1685, one would think, unless, indeed, the parson was as precocious as his son and grandson, both of whom graduated before they were seventeen. But this is hardly probable. Ebenezer's father, I remember, was named John.

My father had talked with men who remembered his great-grandfather, Ebenezer, as a very respectable old gentleman with a goldheaded cane. Dining once with a friend in Philadelphia, I was surprised to see a handsome tankard with *our* arms on it. He told me it came to him by inheritance from the Shippens, one of whom had married a Lowell. I believe we have the right to quarter Levesege, one of our forbears having married an heiress of that name. Theirs is a very pretty coat, three dolphins *passant*, *or*.

If you are making out a pedigree you must be on your guard, for I have been told that all the foundlings of the city of Lowell (and there are a good many of them) are christened with the name. And it is sometimes assumed. Some twenty years ago I received a letter from a person in New York informing me that he was about to assume the name. I paid no attention to the letter, thinking it a trick (as I am sometimes the subject of such) to get an autograph, but, sure enough, he presently sent me a newspaper in which was advertised a legal authentication of his change of name.

The family came from Yardley in Worcestershire, where, I believe, some monuments of them remain in the churchyard. They were a *visitation* family. I hoped to visit Yardley the last time I was in England, but was prevented by being suddenly summoned to Cambridge to receive a degree. The only Lowells now left in England that I could find are the descendants of Rev. Samuel of Bristol, England, who went back from America — or, rather, whose father went. My father saw him in England seventy years ago, and the relationship between them was recognized on both sides. How near it was I have no means of knowing. I have somewhere, but cannot lay my hand on it, a deed of the first John Lowle of Newbury. It is witnessed by Somebody who came out as clerk with Perceval, and seems to be in his handwriting. *How* we are descended from Perceval I know not, but Ebenezer must have known who his grandfather was, and his son would hardly have ventured (in those more scrupulous days) to have assumed arms that did not belong to him. Perceval wrote some verses (neither better nor worse than such usually are) on the death of the first Governor Winthrop. You will

find them (with a palpable error or two of copier or printer) in the appendix to the second volume of Winthrop's "Life and Letters."

I remain,

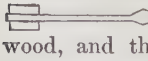
Very truly yours,

J. R. Lowell.

Elmwood, 23d July, 1875.

Dear Sir, — I have no doubt you are right in putting the birth of Ebenezer L. in 1675. My father in his family Bible says he died "in 1711 *æt.* 36." The faded ink shows that this was written many years ago, and I have no doubt he had authority for it. He goes on to say that his widow "married Philip Bougardus, Esq., and died 1761, leaving one daughter married to Eneas Mackay."

I have searched in vain for a bundle of pedigrees (collected by my father) which seem to have gone astray during my two years' absence in Europe. They carried the family back to the thirteenth century (I think), and were obtained from the Heralds' Office.

I don't wonder you think the blunted arrows unsightly. They are all wrong. The arms are a hand grasping three *crossbow bolts*, a very different thing, and with very formidable points to them, as I trust those of the family will always have. I brought home three of them from Germany in '52. They are shaped thus  , the shaft of oak, the *feathers* of lighter wood, and the head steel. The transverse section of the head would be a diamond ◊.

I think it plain that my father knew all about Eben-

ezer, wherever he got it. If I can aid you in any way, I shall be glad to do so.

I remain,
Very truly yours,
J. R. Lowell.

II. *Maternal.*[1]

1. Robert Cutt is supposed to have come from England to this country previous to 1646, going first to the Barbadoes, where he married Mary Hoel, and afterward to Portsmouth, N. H. He removed thence to Kittery, Me., and died there 18 June, 1674.

2. Robert, sixth child of Robert and Mary [Hoel] Cutt, was born in 1673. He married Dorcas Hammond, 18 April, 1698, and died 24 September, 1735.

3. Mary, daughter of Robert and Dorcas [Hammond] Cutt, was born 26 December, 1698. She married, 16 May, 1722, William Whipple, afterward one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and died 28 February, 1783.

3a. Elizabeth, sister of Mary (3), was born 20 March, 1709. She married, 20 March, 1709, Rev. Joseph Whipple, brother of William Whipple, just named; and after his death she married for her second husband, 23 October, 1727, Rev. John Lowell (son of Ebenezer).

4. Mary, daughter of William and Mary [Cutt]

[1] As Mrs. Lowell's paternal ancestry went back but two generations on this side of the Atlantic, it has been thought well to trace her grandmother's descent from Robert Cutt [the name later becoming Cutts], who was in the same generation with John Lowell, the son of the first Perceval Lowell. I am indebted for most of this material to *Genealogy of the Cutts Family in America*, compiled by Cecil Hampden Cutts Howard. Albany: Joel Munsell's Sons. 1892.

Whipple, was born 13 January $17\frac{28}{29}$, married, 1 September, 1748, Robert Traill, a merchant in Portsmouth, from the Orkney Isles, who remained a British subject, and left the country in November, 1775. Mary [Whipple] Traill died 3 October, 1791. Robert Traill, after the Revolution, was a collector of the revenues in the Bermudas.

5. Mary, only daughter of Robert and Mary [Whipple] Traill, baptized 24 May, 1753, married Keith Spence, of Kirkwall, Orkney, who had settled as a merchant in Portsmouth. Later he became purser of the frigate Philadelphia. Mrs. Spence died 18 January, 1824.

6. Harriet Brackett, daughter of Keith and Mary Whipple [Traill] Spence, was born 26 July, 1783; she married the Rev. Charles Lowell, 2 October, 1806, and died 30 March, 1850.

CHILDREN OF JAMES RUSSELL AND MARIA [WHITE] LOWELL.

1. Blanche, born 31 December, 1845; died 19 March, 1847.

2. Mabel, born 9 September, 1847. She married, 2 April, 1872, Edward Burnett, of Southborough, and died at Elmwood, 30 December, 1898. Their children are:

i. James Russell Lowell Burnett, now James Burnett Lowell, his name having been changed at the request of his grandfather.
ii. Joseph.
iii. Francis Lowell.
iv. Esther Lowell.
v. Lois.

3. Rose, born 16 July, 1849; died 2 February 1850.

4. Walter, born 22 December, 1850; died 9 June, 1852.

B. "LIST OF COPIES OF THE CONVERSATIONS TO BE GIVEN AWAY BY THE 'DON'"

This is the heading of a sheet in his own handwriting which Lowell drew up for Robert Carter's instruction. He entrusted the distribution of the books to his friend, as he himself was off on his wedding journey.

1. W. L. Garrison, with author's respects.
2. C. F. Briggs (by Wiley & Putnam, N. Y.), with author's love.
3. Mrs. Chapman, with author's affectionate regards.
4. T. W. Parsons, copy of *Poems* and *Conversations* with author's love (a note to go with these).
5. John S. Dwight (left at Monroe's bookstore, Boston), with author's love.
6. W. Page, with author's love.
7. R. C., with author's love.
8. Rev. Dr. Lowell. Dedication Copy. Ask Owen to send it up.
9. Charles R. Lowell, Jr., with uncle's love (No. 1 Winter Place).
10. *Rev. Chandler Robbins, with author's sincere regards* (*Monroe's bookstore*).
13. J. R. L. 3, through Antislavery office, care J. M. McKim.
14. Mr. Nichols (printing office), with author's sincere regards.
15. R. W. Emerson, with author's affectionate respects.
16. N. Hawthorne, with author's love.

Both these in one package, directed to Hawthorne and left at Miss Peabody's.

17. *Frank Shaw, with author's love.*
18. C. W. Storey, Jr., with happy New Year. I suppose Mr. Owen will allow me 20 copies, as he did of the *Poems.*

If the "Don" thinks of any more which I have forgotten, let him send them with judicious inscriptions.

19. "To Miss S. C. Lowell, with the best New Year's wishes of her affectionate nephew, the author." (Mr. Owen will send this up.)
20. Joseph T. Buckingham, Esq., with author's regards and thanks.

A letter to Lowell from John Owen, dated 10 April 1845, mentions a copy of the book which Lowell had sent with a letter to Miss Brontë.

C. A LIST OF THE WRITINGS OF JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, ARRANGED AS NEARLY AS MAY BE IN ORDER OF PUBLICATION

NOTE. Titles of Poems are set in *Italic type*. Titles of books are in small capitals, either ROMAN or *ITALIC*, as the books are in prose or verse. Conjectural writings have their titles enclosed in brackets.

[The titles as far as the *Class Poem* are of contributions to Harvardiana.]

1837.

Imitation of Burns. September.
Dramatic Sketch. September.
New Poem of Homer. September.
A Voice from the Tombs. October.
What is it? October.
Hints to Theme Writers. October.
Obituary. October.
The Serenade. October.
The Old Bell. October.
The Idler, No. I. November.
Saratoga Lake. November.
Hints to Reviewers. November.
Skillygoliana, I. November.

1838.

Scenes from an Unpublished Drama, by the late G. A. Slimton, esq. January.
Skillygoliana, II. January.
Chapters from the Life of Philomelus Prig. February.
Skillygoliana, III. February.
The Idler, No. II. March.
Skillygoliana, IV. April.
A Dead Letter. May.

[*Extracts from a Hasty Pudding Poem.*] June.

Translations from Uhland. i. Das Ständchen ; ii. Der Weisse Hirsch. June.

To Mount Washington, on a second visit. July.

Song: "A pair of black eyes." July.

Class Poem. | "Some said, John, print it ; others said, Not so ; | Some said, It might do good ; others said, No." | Bunyan. | MDCCCXXXVIII. | Poem dated, Concord, August 21, 1838.

1839.

Song: "Ye Yankees of the Bay State." Boston Post, 27 February.

Threnodia on an Infant. Southern Literary Messenger, May. Signed H. P.

1840.

[All the contributions this year were to the Southern Literary Messenger.]

Sonnet: "Verse cannot tell thee how beautiful thou art." March. Signed H. P.

Song: "What reck I of the stars when I." March. Signed H. P.

Sonnet: "My friend, I pray thee call not *this* Society." March. Signed H. P.

The Serenade: "Gentle, Lady, be thy sleeping." April. Signed H. P.

Music. May. Signed H. P.

Song: "O, I must look on that sweet face once more before I die." June. Signed H. P.

Song: "Lift up the curtains of thine eyes." June. Signed H. P.

Sonnet: "O, child of nature ! oh, most meek and free." June. Signed H. P.

Isabel. June.

The Bobolink. July. Signed H. P.

Ianthe. July. Signed H. P.

Flowers. July. Signed H. P.

1841.

A | *Year's Life.* | *by* | *James Russell Lowell.* | Ich habe gelebt und geliebet. | Boston : | C. C. Little and J. Brown | MDCCCXLI.

Callirhoë, by H. Perceval, dated 1841. Graham's Magazine, March.

Ballad: "Gloomily the river floweth." Graham's Magazine, October.

Merry England. Graham's Magazine, November.

The Loved One. National Anti-Slavery Standard, 16 December.

Sonnet: "Great truths are portions of the soul of man." The Liberty Bell.

1842.

Sonnet to Keats, dated March, 1841. Boston Miscellany, January.

[*Agatha*], dated September, 1840. Boston Miscellany, January.

To Perdita Singing, dated February, 1841. Boston Miscellany, January.

Song: "Violet! sweet violet!" Graham's Magazine, January.

Sonnet: To the Spirit of Keats. Arcturus, January.

Sonnet: Sunset and Moonshine. Arcturus, January.

Sonnet: "Poet! thou art most wealthy, being poor," dated November 25, 1841. Arcturus, February.

An Ode: "In the Old Days of awe and keen-eyed wonder," dated December, 1841. Boston Miscellany, February.

Sonnet: "Like some black mountain glooming huge aloof," dated October, 1841. Boston Miscellany, February.

Rosaline. Graham's Magazine, February.

Sonnet: "If some small savor creep into my rhymes." Graham's Magazine, February.

Fancies about a Rosebud pressed in an old copy of Spenser. Graham's Magazine, March.

[Getting up.] Boston Miscellany, March.

[Disquisition on Foreheads. By Job Simifrons.] Boston Miscellany, March.

The Old English Dramatists. (Unsigned.) Boston Miscellany, April.

Sonnet: "Whene'er I read in mournful history," dated 25 September, 1841. Boston Miscellany, May.

The Old English Dramatists, No. II. Boston Miscellany, May.

The Two, dated November, 1840. Boston Miscellany, May.

The First Client. (Unsigned.) Boston Miscellany, May.

Sonnet: "My Father, since I love, thy presence cries," dated November 29, 1841. Arcturus, May.

Sonnet: "The hope of truth grows stronger day by day," dated December 10, 1841. Arcturus, May.

Sonnet: "I love those poets, of whatever creed," dated April 20, 1841. Arcturus, May.

Sonnets:

I. "As the broad ocean endlessly upheaveth."

II. "Once hardly in a cycle blossometh."

III. "The love of all things springs from love of one."

IV. "A poet cannot strive for despotism."

V. "Therefore think not the Past is wise alone."

VI. "Far 'yond this narrow parapet of time."

The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, May.

Reprinted in Poems as "On reading Wordsworth's Sonnets in Defence of Capital Punishment."

Farewell. Graham's Magazine, June.

A Dirge. Graham's Magazine, July.

A Fantasy, dated 12 January, 1842. Boston Miscellany July.

[*The True Radical.*] Boston Miscellany, August.

The Old English Dramatists, No. III. Boston Miscellany, August.

Sonnet: "Poet, if men from wisdom turn away." (Unsigned.) National Anti-Slavery Standard, 1 September.

The Shepherd of King Admetus. Boston Miscellany, September.

An Incident in a Railroad Car, dated Boston, April, 1842. The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, October.

[*To an Æolian Harp at Night*], dated February, 1842. Boston Miscellany, December.

Sonnet: "Great Truths are portions of the Soul of man." The Liberty Bell.

Sonnet: "If ye have not the one great lesson learned." The Liberty Bell.

Pierpont: "The hungry flames did never yet seem hot." The Liberty Bell.

1843.

Introduction. The Pioneer, January.

[*Voltaire.*] The Pioneer, January.

[*The Follower.*] The Pioneer, January.

Sonnet: "Our love is not a fading earthly flower." The Pioneer, January.

The Plays of Thomas Middleton. The Pioneer, January.

The Rose. The Pioneer, January.

[Dickens's "American Notes."] The Pioneer, January.

[Hawthorne's Historical Tales for Youth.] The Pioneer, January.

A Parable. The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, February.

The Moon. Graham's Magazine, February.

Song Writing. The Pioneer, February.

To M. O. S. The Pioneer, February.

[The Book of British Ballads.] The Pioneer, February.

[Longfellow's "Poems on Slavery."] The Pioneer, February.

[Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome."] The Pioneer, February.

[*Two Sonnets to Wordsworth.*] Graham's Magazine, March.

The Street. The Pioneer, March.

Stanzas on Freedom, sung at the Anti-Slavery Picnic in Dedham, on the Anniversary of West-Indian Emancipation, 1 August.

In Sadness. Graham's Magazine, August.

Prometheus, dated Cambridge, Mass., June, 1843. The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, August.

Forgetfulness. New York Mirror [copied into National Anti-Slavery Standard, 7 September.]

A Glance behind the Curtain. The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, September.

A Reverie. Graham's Magazine, October.

The Fatherland. The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, October.

POEMS | by | James Russell Lowell. | Cambridge: | Published by John Owen. | MDCCCXLIV.

1844.

Rallying Cry for New England against the Annexation of Texas, by a Yankee. Boston Courier, 19 March.

New Translations of the Writings of Miss Bremer. North American Review, April.

Introduction to Whittier's "*Texas: Voice of New England.*" Boston Courier, 17 April.

A Mystical Ballad. Graham's Magazine, May.

New-Year's Eve, 1844; a Fragment. Graham's Magazine, July.

On the Death of a Friend's Child, dated Cambridge, Mass., September 3, 1844. The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, October.

A Chippewa Legend. The Liberty Bell.

CONVERSATIONS | ON SOME OF | THE OLD POETS | by | James Russell Lowell |

> "Or, if I would delight my private hours
> With music or with poem, where, so soon
> As in our native language, can I find
> That solace?"
>
> PARADISE REGAINED.

Cambridge: | Published by John Owen | MDCCCXLV.

1845.

To the Dandelion. Graham's Magazine, January.

A Song to my Wife. The Broadway Journal, 4 January.

The Epitaph: "What means this glosing epitaph?" dated

Rockwood, 7 February, 1844. The Broadway Journal, 11 January.

Our Position. Pennsylvania Freeman, 16 January.

Now is always best. The Broadway Journal, 25 January.

An Epigram on Certain Conservatives. The Broadway Journal, 25 January.

[Texas]. The Pennsylvania Freeman, 30 January.

Anti-Texas, written on occasion of the Convention in Faneuil Hall, January 29. Boston Courier, 30 January, under title *Another Rallying Cry by a Yankee.*

Edgar Allan Poe. Graham's Magazine, February.

[The Prejudice of Color]. The Pennsylvania Freeman, 13 February.

Remembered Music. The Broadway Journal, 15 February.

The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. The Broadway Journal, 22 February.

The Church and the Clergy. The Pennsylvania Freeman, 27 February, 27 March.

The Ghost-Seer. The Broadway Journal, 8 March.

[President Tyler's Message on the African Slave Trade]. The Pennsylvania Freeman, 13 March.

[The Union]. The Pennsylvania Freeman, 10 April.

An Incident of the Fire at Hamburg. Graham's Magazine, May.

Review of Fitz-Greene Halleck's "Alnwick Castle, with other Poems." The Broadway Journal, 3 May.

Lines on reading of the capture of certain fugitive slaves near Washington. Boston Courier, 19 July.

To the Future. Graham's Magazine, August.

Orpheus. The American Review, August.

To a Pine Tree, dated Elmwood, July 16, 1845. The Harbinger, 2 August.

A Contrast. The Liberty Chime.

The Falconer, afterward, abridged, *The Falcon*, dated 26 November, 1845. The Liberty Bell.

The Happy Martyrdom. The Liberty Bell.

Verses suggested by the Present Crisis, afterward *The Present Crisis.* Boston Courier, 11 December.

An Interview with Miles Standish. Boston Courier, 30 December.

1846.

To the Past. Graham's Magazine, January.

Lines on the Death of Charles Turner Torrey. Boston Courier, 23 May.

Anti-Slavery in the United States. London Daily News, 2 February, 18 March, 17 April, 18 May.

A Letter from Mr. Ezekiel Biglow of Jaalam to the Hon. Joseph T. Buckingham, editor of the Boston Courier, inclosing a poem of his son, Mr. Hosea Biglow (*Biglow Papers*, I.) Boston Courier, 17 June.

Daniel Webster. National Anti-Slavery Standard,[1] 2 July.

The Royal Pedigree. Boston Courier, 4 December.

The Oak. Standard, 31 December.

1847.

Letter from Boston, postmarked 27 December, 1846. The Pennsylvania Freeman, January.

Above and Below. The Young American, January.

Si descendero in infernum, ades. The Harbinger, 16 January.

The Search. Standard, 25 February.

The New Timon. North American Review, April.

Hebe. The Young American, May.

D'Israeli's Tancred, or the New Crusade. North American Review, July.

Letter from a Volunteer in Saltillo (*Biglow Papers*, II.). Boston Courier, 18 August.

The Landlord. The People's Journal, 4 September.

What Mr. Robinson thinks (*Biglow Papers*, III.). Boston Courier, 2 November.

Extreme Unction. The Liberty Bell.

Remarks of Increase D. O'Phace, esquire (*Biglow Papers*, IV.). Boston Courier, 28 December.

[1] Abbreviated afterward in this record as "Standard."

1848.

Poems | by | James Russell Lowell. | Second series. | Cambridge : Published by | George Nichols. | Boston : | B. B. Mussey and Company. | 1848. Copyright, 1847.

Review of Tennyson's "Princess." Massachusetts Quarterly Review, March.

Browning's Plays and Poems. North American Review, April.

Ode to France, dated February, 1848. Standard, 6 April.

The French Revolution of 1848. Standard, 13 April.

Shall we ever be Republicans ? Standard, 20 April.

The Debate in the Sennit (*Biglow Papers*, V.). Boston Courier, 3 May.

The Pious Editor's Creed (*Biglow Papers*, VI.). Standard, 4 May.

A Parable. Standard, 18 May.

An Imaginary Conversation. Standard, 18 May.

A Letter from a Candidate for the Presidency (*Biglow Papers*, VII.). Standard, 1 June.

The Sacred Parasol. Standard, 8 June.

Freedom. Standard, 15 June.

The Nominations for the Presidency. Standard, 22 June.

Sympathy with Ireland. Standard, 29 June.

A Second Letter from B. Sawin, esq. (*Biglow Papers*, VIII.). Standard, 6 July.

What will Mr. Webster do ? Standard, 13 July.

Leaving the Matter open, a Tale by Homer Wilbur, A. M., reprinted in Introduction to *Biglow Papers*. Standard, 27 July.

To Lamartine. Standard, 3 August.

The Buffalo Convention. Standard, 10 August.

The Irish Rebellion. Standard, 24 August.

Fanaticism in the Navy. Standard, 31 August.

Exciting Intelligence from South Carolina. Standard, 7 September.

Editorial article, beginning : "When we first went to the theatre, that which delighted us most, among the thousand

and one marvels, was the swiftness with which a change of costume was effected." Standard, 14 September.

To the Memory of Hood. Standard, 21 September.

Another Letter from B. Sawin, esq. (*Biglow Papers*, IX.). Standard, 28 September.

Editorial article, beginning: "Chance has thrown in our way a stray number of the 'Christian Observer.'" Standard, 5 October.

Review of "The Conquerors of the New World and their Bondsmen." Standard, 12, 26 October.

The Day of Small Things, afterward *To W. L. Garrison.* Standard, 19 October.

READER! *Walk up at once (it will soon be too late) and* | *buy at a perfectly ruinous rate* | a | FABLE FOR CRITICS; | or | BETTER — | *I like, as a thing that the reader's first fancy may strike,* | *an old-fashioned title-page,* | *such as presents a tabular view of the volume's contents* — | A GLANCE | AT A FEW OF OUR LITERARY PROGENIES | (*Mrs. Malaprop's word*) | from | THE TUB OF DIOGENES; | A VOCAL and MUSICAL MEDLEY. | THAT IS, | a SERIES OF JOKES. | BY A WONDERFUL QUIZ, | *who accompanies himself with a rub-a-dub-dub,* FULL OF SPIRIT AND GRACE, | *on the top of the tub.* | SET FORTH IN | *October the 21st day, in the year '48.* BY | G. P. PUTNAM, Broadway.

Ode, written for the celebration of the introduction of the Cochituate water into the city of Boston, 25 October.

The Ex-Mayor's Crumb of Consolation: a Pathetic Ballad. Standard, 26 October.

To John G. Palfrey. Standard, 2 November.

Calling things by their Right Names. Standard, 9 November.

Melibœus Hipponax. | *THE BIGLOW PAPERS,* | Edited, | with an Introduction, Notes, Glossary, | and Copious Index, | by Homer Wilbur, A. M., | Pastor of the First Church in Jaalam, and (prospective) member of | many Literary, Learned and Scientific societies, | (*for which see page v.*) | Cambridge: Published by George Nichols.

The Sower. Standard, 16 November.

Editorial article, beginning: "If, as it has been often said, America be a kind of posterity in relation to Europe." Standard, 23 November.

Editorial article, beginning: "The recent decision of the English Government." Standard, 30 November.

The Works of Walter Savage Landor. Massachusetts Quarterly Review, December.

Ambrose. Standard, 7 December.

The President's Message. Standard, 14 December.

Review of Whittier's Poems. Standard, 14 December.

El Dorado. Standard, 21 December.

A Washington Monument. Standard, 28 December.

1849.

The Mill, afterward *Beaver Brook.* Standard, 4 January.

Editorial article, beginning: "There is no need of any speculation as to the course Whigs as Whigs will take." Standard, 11 January.

Our Southern Brethren. Standard, 18 January.

Politics and the Pulpit. Standard, 25 January.

Ethnology. Standard, 1 February.

The Parting of the Ways. Standard, 8 February.

Mr. Calhoun's Report. Standard, 15 February.

The Moral Movement against Slavery. Standard, 22 February.

Editorial article, beginning: "Next to the charge of being possessed with only a single idea." Standard, 1 March.

A Day in June, afterward, enlarged, *Al Fresco.* Standard, 8 March.

Editorial article, beginning: "The long succession of Democratic rulers has at length been broken." Standard, 15 March.

Mr. Clay as an Abolitionist. — Second appearance in Fifty Years. Standard, 22 March.

Lines suggested by the Graves of Two English Soldiers on Concord Battle-Ground. Standard, 29 March.

An Oriental Apologue. Standard, 12 April.

Editorial article, beginning : "The German poet Schiller in a little poem." Standard, 19 April.

Anti-Slavery Criticism upon Mr. Clay's Letter. Standard, 26 April.

King Retro. Standard, 10 May.

Editorial article, beginning : "In the Standard of April 19th an article was copied." Standard, 10 May.

Bibliolatres. Standard, 24 May.

Mobs. Standard, 14 June.

Two Sonnets, afterward named *Trial.* Standard, 28 June.

Longfellow's Kavanagh : Nationality in Literature. North American Review, July.

The Roman Republic. Standard, 12 July.

Fourth of July in Charleston. Standard, 26 July.

Moderation. Standard, 9 August.

Eurydice. Standard, 23 August.

Kossuth. Standard, 6 September.

Editorial article, beginning : "Our readers have had, from time to time, the privilege of seeing extracts from Southern newspapers." Standard, 20 September.

Editorial article, beginning : "Every now and then we see it asserted." Standard, 4 October.

To ——— : "We, too, have autumns, when our leaves." Standard, 18 October.

Canada. Standard, 1 November.

The Lesson of the Pine, afterward enlarged and entitled, *A Mood.* Standard, 15 November.

California. Standard, 29 November.

Review of "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," Massachusetts Quarterly Review, December.

General Bem's Conversion. Standard, 6 December.

Editorial article, beginning : "The last European steamer brings us what is said to be the final determination of the Turkish government in regard to the Hungarian exiles." Standard, 13 December.

The Burial of Theobald. The Liberty Bell.

The First Snow-Fall. Standard, 27 December.

1850.

What shall be done for the Hungarian Exiles? Boston Courier, 3 January.

New Year's Eve, 1850. Standard, 10 January.

A Review of Judd's "Philo." Standard, 24 January.

Editorial article, beginning: "When King Log first made his avatar among the frogs." Standard, 21 February.

Compromise. Standard, 7 March.

Mr. Webster's Speech. Standard, 21 March.

Out of Doors. Graham's Magazine, April.

Editorial article, beginning: "In the comment which we made a fortnight ago on Mr. Webster's speech." Standard, 4 April.

Mahmood the Image Breaker. Standard, 18 April.

Dara. Graham's Magazine, July.

The Northern Sancho Panza and his vicarious Cork tree. Standard, 18 July.

Pseudo Conservatism. Standard, 14 November.

A Dream I had. Standard, 28 November.

To J. F. H., afterward *An Invitation to J. F. H.* Graham's Magazine, December.

Mr. Bowen and the Christian Examiner, I. Boston Daily Advertiser, 28 December.

1851.

Mr. Bowen and the Christian Examiner, II. Boston Daily Advertiser, 2 January.

Anti-Apis. Standard, 30 January.

Appledore, No. V., in *Pictures from Appledore.* Graham's Magazine, February.

The Unhappy Lot of Mr. Knott. Graham's Magazine, April.

On Receiving a piece of Flax Cotton, dated 18 April, 1851. Standard, 1 May.

1853.

The Fountain of Youth. Putnam's Magazine, January.

Our Own, his Wanderings and Personal Adventures. Putnam's Magazine, April, May, June.

A Moosehead Journal. Putnam's Magazine, November.

1854.

The Singing Leaves. Graham's Magazine, January.

A Winter Evening Hymn to my Fire. Putnam's Magazine, March.

Without and Within. Putnam's Magazine, April.

Fireside Travels. Putnam's Magazine, April, May.

Leaves from my Italian Journal. Graham's Magazine, April, May, July.

[*Without and Within, II. The Restaurant.*] Putnam's Magazine, May.

The Windharp. Putnam's Magazine, December.

Auf Wiedersehen. Putnam's Magazine, December.

1855.

Hakon's Lay. Graham's Magazine, January.

My Appledore Gallery, No. I. *August afternoon*, afterward, with changes I.–IV. of *Pictures from Appledore.* The Crayon, 3 January.

My Appledore Gallery, No. II. *Sunset and Moonset*, afterward VI. of *Pictures from Appledore.* The Crayon, 31 January.

Invita Minerva. The Crayon, 30 May.

1857.

The Origin of Didactic Poetry. Atlantic Monthly, November.

Sonnet: "The Maple puts her corals on in May." Atlantic Monthly, November.

The Round Table. Atlantic Monthly, November.

My Portrait Gallery. Atlantic Monthly, December.

Memoir of Shelley, prefixed to The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

1858.

Béranger (translated from Sainte-Beuve). Atlantic Monthly, February.

The Nest. Atlantic Monthly, March.

Review of Guerrazzi's Beatrice Cenci. Atlantic Monthly, March.

Happiness. Atlantic Monthly, April.

Mr. Buchanan's Administration. Atlantic Monthly, April.

Review of Smith's Library of Old Authors. Atlantic Monthly, April, May.

Epigram on J. M. Atlantic Monthly, May.

Beatrice, afterward *Das Ewig-Weibliche.* Atlantic Monthly, June.

Shipwreck. Atlantic Monthly, June.

Review of Dramatic Works of John Webster. Atlantic Monthly, June.

The American Tract Society. Atlantic Monthly, July.

The Trustees' Lament. Atlantic Monthly, August.

The Pocket Celebration of the Fourth. Atlantic Monthly, August.

The Dead House. Atlantic Monthly, October.

A Sample of Consistency. Atlantic Monthly, November.

1859.

White's Shakespeare. Atlantic Monthly, January, February.

Longfellow's "The Courtship of Miles Standish." Atlantic Monthly, January.

Holland's "Bitter-Sweet." Atlantic Monthly, May.

Allibone's "Dictionary of Authors." Atlantic Monthly, June.

Trübner's "Bibliographical Guide to American Literature." Atlantic Monthly, June.

Notice of "Index to Catalogue of Boston City Library." Atlantic Monthly, June.

Notice of "Memoir of Theophilus Parsons." Atlantic Monthly, July.

Dana's "To Cuba and Back." Atlantic Monthly, July.

Palmer's "The New and the Old." Atlantic Monthly, September.

Copeland's "Country Life." Atlantic Monthly, September.

Review of "Dictionary of Americanisms," and other works on Language. Atlantic Monthly, November.

Coolidge and Mansfield's "History and Description of New England." Atlantic Monthly, November.

Gould's "Reply to the Statement of the Trustees of the Dudley Observatory." Atlantic Monthly, November.

Italy, 1859. Atlantic Monthly, December.

Notice of "Forty-four Years of the Life of a Hunter, being Reminiscences of Meshach Browning." Atlantic Monthly, December.

Milburn's "Ten Years of Preacher-Life." Atlantic Monthly, December.

Notice of "A First Lesson in Natural History." Atlantic Monthly, December.

Dante. Appleton's New American Encyclopædia. Reprinted, May, 1886, in fifth annual report of the Dante Society.

1860.

Notice of "Sir Rohan's Ghost." Atlantic Monthly, February.

To the Muse. Atlantic Monthly, March.

Marsh's "Lectures on the English Language." Atlantic Monthly, April.

Hawthorne's "The Marble Faun." Atlantic Monthly, April.

Notice of "Poems by Two Friends." Atlantic Monthly, April.

Norton's "Notes of Travel and Study in Italy." Atlantic Monthly, May.

Webster's "American Dictionary of the English Language." Atlantic Monthly, May.

Worcester's "A Dictionary of the English Language." Atlantic Monthly, May.

Coles's "Dies Iræ." Atlantic Monthly, June.

Collins's "A Voyage down the Amoor." Atlantic Monthly, June.

Lowell's "Fresh Hearts that failed Three Thousand Years ago." Atlantic Monthly, June.

The New Tariff Bill. Atlantic Monthly, July.

Wedgwood's "A Dictionary of English Etymology." Atlantic Monthly, August.

Leslie's "Autobiographical Recollections." Atlantic Monthly, September.

Trowbridge's "The Old Battle Ground." Atlantic Monthly, September.

July reviewed by September (with W. B. Rogers). Atlantic Monthly, September.

The Election in November. Atlantic Monthly, October.

Mr. Jarves's Collection. Atlantic Monthly, October.

Olmsted's "A Journey in the Back County." Atlantic Monthly, November.

Whittier's "Home Ballads and Poems." Atlantic Monthly, November.

A Plea for Freedom from Speech and Figures of Speech Makers. Atlantic Monthly, December.

Bryant's "A Forest Hymn." Atlantic Monthly, December.

Stoddard's "Loves and Heroines of the Poets." Atlantic Monthly, December.

Palmer's "Folk Songs." Atlantic Monthly, December.

1861.

The Question of the Hour. Atlantic Monthly, January.

Prior's "Ancient Danish Ballads." Atlantic Monthly, January.

Chambers's "Edinburgh Papers." Atlantic Monthly, January.

Holland's "Miss Gilbert's Career." Atlantic Monthly, January.

E. Pluribus Unum. Atlantic Monthly, February.

Parton's "Life of Andrew Jackson." Atlantic Monthly, March.

Rose Terry's "Poems." Atlantic Monthly, March.

Holmes's "Elsie Venner." Atlantic Monthly, April.

The Pickens-and-Stealins' Rebellion. Atlantic Monthly, June.

Ode to Happiness. Atlantic Monthly, September.

The Washers of the Shroud. Atlantic Monthly, November.

Self-Possession *vs.* Prepossession. Atlantic Monthly, December.

1862.

Birdofredum Sawin, Esq., to Mr. Hosea Biglow, Atlantic Monthly, January, March.

Arnold's "On Translating Homer" and Newman's "Homeric Translation in Theory and Practice." Atlantic Monthly, January.

Mason and Slidell: a Yankee Idyl. Atlantic Monthly, February.

Müller's "Lectures on the Science of Language." Atlantic Monthly, March.

A Message of Jeff Davis in Secret Session. Atlantic Monthly, April.

Speech of Honble Preserved Doe in Secret Caucus. Atlantic Monthly, May.

Sunthin' in the Pastoral Line. Atlantic Monthly, June.

1863.

In the Half-Way House. Atlantic Monthly, January.

Latest Views of Mr. Biglow. Atlantic Monthly, February.

Russell's "My Diary, North and South." Atlantic Monthly, March.

Story's "Roba di Roma." Atlantic Monthly, April.

Two Scenes from the Life of Blondel. Atlantic Monthly, November.

1864.

Memoriæ Positum R. G. S. Atlantic Monthly, January.

The President's Policy. North American Review, January.

Longfellow's "Tales of a Wayside Inn." North American Review, January.

Whittier's "In War Time." North American Review, January.

Stedman's "Alice of Monmouth." North American Review, January.

The Black Preacher. Atlantic Monthly, April.

McClellan's Report. North American Review, April.

Gurowski's Diary. North American Review, April.

Diplomatic Correspondence. North American Review, April.

Beecher's Autobiography. North American Review, April.

Thackeray's "Roundabout Papers." North American Review, April.

Chaucer's "Legende of Goode Women" and "Child's Observations on the Language of Chaucer. North American Review, April.

Jean Ingelow's Poems. North American Review, April.

Barnes's "Poems in the Dorset Dialect." North American Review, April.

To a Friend who sent me a Meerschaum. Spirit of the Fair, 12 April.

FIRESIDE TRAVELS. | By | James Russell Lowell. | "*Travelling makes a man sit still in his old age with satisfaction and travel over the world again in his chair and bed by discourse and thoughts.*"

THE VOYAGE OF ITALY, BY RICHARD LASSELS, GENT.

Boston: | Ticknor and Fields. | 1864.

The Rebellion: its Causes and Consequences. North American Review, July.

Hazlitt's "Poems of Richard Lovelace." North American Review, July.

The Next General Election, [afterward, McClellan or Lincoln.] North American Review, October.

1865.

On Board the '76. Atlantic Monthly, January.

Palfrey's "History of New England." North American Review, January.

Mr. Hosea Biglow to the Editor of the "Atlantic Monthly." Atlantic Monthly, April.

Reconstruction. North American Review, April.

Gold-Egg: a Dream Fantasy. Atlantic Monthly, May.

Scotch the Snake, or Kill it. North American Review, July.

Lord Derby's "Translation of the Iliad." North American Review, July.

Ode Recited at the Harvard Commemoration. Atlantic Monthly, September.

Thoreau's "Letters." North American Review, October.

Parkman's "France and England." North American Review, October.

1866.

What Rabbi Jehosha said. The Nation, 18 January.

A Worthy Ditty. The Nation, 25 January.

Carlyle's "Frederick the Great." North American Review, April.

The President on the Stump. North American Review, April.

Swinburne's "Tragedies." North American Review, April.

Mr. Worsley's Nightmare. The Nation, 5 April.

Mr. Hosea Biglow's Speech in March Meeting. Atlantic Monthly, May.

To J. B. on sending me a seven-pound trout. Atlantic Monthly, July.

At the Commencement Dinner, on acknowledging a toast to the Smith Professor, 19 July.

The Miner. Atlantic Monthly, August.

The Seward-Johnson Reaction. North American Review, October.

Wendell Phillips in Congress. The Nation, 4 October.

1867.

Fitz Adam's Story. Atlantic Monthly, January.

Ward's "Life and Letters of Percival." North American Review, January.

Hob Gobbling's Song. Our Young Folks, January.

A Familiar Epistle to a Friend. Atlantic Monthly, April.

Lessing. North American Review, April.

An Ember Picture. Atlantic Monthly, July.

Rousseau and the Sentimentalists. North American Review, July.

Parkman's "France and England in North America." North American Review, July.

Uncle Cobus's Story. Our Young Folks, July.

The Nightingale in the Study. Atlantic Monthly, September.

The Winthrop Papers. North American Review, October.

A Great Public Character. Atlantic Monthly, November.

1868.

In the Twilight. Atlantic Monthly, January.

Witchcraft. North American Review, January.

Shakespeare Once More. North American Review, April.

After the Burial. Atlantic Monthly, May.

A June Idyl. Atlantic Monthly, June.

Dryden. North American Review, July.

The Footpath. Atlantic Monthly, August.

"Poems of John James Piatt." North American Review, October.

Mr. Emerson's New Course of Lectures. The Nation, 12 November.

Under the Willows | *and* | *Other Poems.* By | James Russell Lowell. | Boston : | Fields, Osgood & Co., | Successors to Ticknor and Fields. | 1869.

My Garden Acquaintance. The Atlantic Almanac, 1869.

1869.

The Flying Dutchman. Atlantic Monthly, January.

On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners. Atlantic Monthly, January.

A Look before and after. North American Review, January.

Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations." North American Review, July.

A Good Word for Winter. The Atlantic Almanac, 1870.

1870.

The Cathedral. Atlantic Monthly, January.

The Cathedral. | By | James Russell Lowell. | Boston : | Fields, Osgood & Co. | 1870.

Hazlitt's "Library of Old Authors." North American Review, April.

Among My Books. | By | James Russell Lowell, A. M. | Professor of Belles-Lettres in Harvard College. | Boston : | Fields, Osgood & Co. | 1870.

Chaucer. North American Review, July.

A Virginian in New England Thirty-five Years Ago, Introduction to. Atlantic Monthly, August.

1871.

Pope. North American Review, January.

Goodwin's "Plutarch's Morals." North American Review, April.

My Study Windows. | By | James Russell Lowell, A. M. | Professor of Belles-Lettres in Harvard College. | Boston: | James R. Osgood and Company. | Late Ticknor & Fields, and Fields, Osgood & Co. | 1871.

1872.

Masson's "Life of John Milton." North American Review, January.

The Shadow of Dante. North American Review, July.

1874.

Agassiz. Atlantic Monthly, May.

An Epitaph. The Nation, 1 October.

Jeffries Wyman. The Nation, 8 October.

1875.

Spenser. North American Review, April.

Sonnet to F. A. Atlantic Monthly, May.

Ode read at the Concord Centennial. Atlantic Monthly, June.

Joseph Winlock. The Nation, 17 June.

James's "Sketches." The Nation, 24 June.

Sonnets from over Sea. Atlantic Monthly, July.

Under the Great Elm. Atlantic Monthly, August.

The World's Fair, 1876. The Nation, 5 August.

Tempora Mutantur. The Nation, 26 August.

The Dancing Bear. Atlantic Monthly, September.

1876.

Forster's "Swift." The Nation, 13, 20 April.

"The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne." The Nation, 27 April.

A Misconception. The Nation, 10 August.

Campaign Epigrams: A Coincidence ; Defrauding Nature ; The Widow's Mite. The Nation, 14 September.

Campaign Epigrams: Moieties ; The Astronomer Misplaced. The Nation, 12 October.

Among My Books. | Second Series. | By | James Russell Lowell, | Professor of Belles-Lettres in Harvard College. | Boston : | James R. Osgood and Company, | Late Ticknor & Fields, and Fields, Osgood & Co. | 1876.

An Ode for the Fourth of July, 1876. Atlantic Monthly, December.

1877.

Birthday Verses. Atlantic Monthly, January.

Bankside. The Nation, 31 May.

Motley (a Note). The Nation, 7 June.

Three Memorial Poems. | By | James Russell Lowell. | Εἰς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης. | Boston : | James R. Osgood and Company, | Late Ticknor & Fields, and Fields, Osgood & Co. | 1877.

Night Watches. Atlantic Monthly, July.

1880.

After dinner speech at *Déjeuner* to American actors. Reported in The Era, London, 2 August.

1881.

Garfield. Spoken in London, 24 September.

Phœbe. The Century, November.

Stanley. Speech at Chapter House of Westminster Abbey, 13 December.

1882.

Estrangement. The Century, May.

1883.

Fielding. Address at Taunton, England, 4 September.

1884.

Wordsworth. Given 10 May.

Democracy. Delivered at Birmingham, England, 6 October.

1885.

Coleridge. Address at Westminster Abbey, 7 May.

An after dinner speech at the Celebration of Forefathers' Day in Plymouth. 21 December.

Books and Libraries. Address at Chelsea, Massachusetts, 22 December.

Speech as presiding officer at dinner of Massachusetts Reform League, 29 December. Printed in Boston Post, 30 December.

1886.

International Copyright. The Century, February.

Gray. New Princeton Review, March.

Oration in Sanders Theatre on the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Foundation of Harvard University. Delivered 8 November.

DEMOCRACY | AND OTHER ADDRESSES | by | James Russell Lowell | Boston and New York | Houghton, Mifflin & Company | The Riverside Press, Cambridge | 1887 [Copyright, 1886.]

1887.

Credidimus Jovem regnare. Atlantic Monthly, February.

Fancy or Fact? Atlantic Monthly, March.

Speech at Authors' Reading, 28 November.

The Progress of the World. Introduction to "The World's Progress." Gately & O'Gorman, Boston.

1888.

The Secret. Atlantic Monthly, January.

Endymion: A Mystical Comment on Titian's "Sacred and Profane Love." Atlantic Monthly, February.

Some Letters of Walter Savage Landor, Introduction to. The Century, February.

The Late Mrs. Ann Benson Procter. The Nation, 29 March.

Turner's Old Téméraire: under a Figure symbolizing the Church. Atlantic Monthly, April.

The Place of the Independent in Politics. Address delivered before the Reform Club of New York, 13 April.

POLITICAL ESSAYS | By | James Russell Lowell | Boston and New York | Houghton, Mifflin and Company | The Riverside Press, Cambridge | 1888

HEARTSEASE AND RUE | By | James Russell Lowell | Boston and New York | Houghton, Mifflin and Company | The Riverside Press, Cambridge | 1888

1889.

"Our Literature." Response to a toast, on the hundredth Anniversary of Washington's Inauguration, 30 April.

How I consulted the Oracle of the Goldfishes. Atlantic Monthly, August.

Introduction to Walton's "Angler," published by Little, Brown & Co.

The Study of Modern Languages. Address before the Modern Language Association of America.

1890.

The Infant Prodigy. Signed F. de T. The Nation, 1 May.

In a Volume of Sir Thomas Browne. Atlantic Monthly, July.

Inscription for a Memorial Bust of Fielding. Atlantic Monthly, September.

Introduction to Milton's "Areopagitica," published by the Grolier Club.

WRITINGS OF JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL. Riverside Edition. 10 volumes. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

"Thou Spell, avaunt!" Atlantic Monthly, December.

My Brook. New York Ledger, 13 December.

POSTHUMOUS.

1891.

Latest Literary Essays | and Addresses | of James Russell Lowell | Boston and New York | Houghton, Mifflin & Company | [1892 | Copyright, 1891.]

His Ship. Harper's Monthly, December.

Shakespeare's Richard III. Atlantic Monthly, December. (Read first before the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, in 1883.)

1892.

On a Bust of General Grant. Scribner's Magazine, March.

The Old English Dramatists. Harper's Monthly, June.

Marlowe. Harper's Monthly, July.

Webster. Harper's Monthly, August.

Beaumont and Fletcher. Harper's Monthly, October.

Massinger and Ford. Harper's Monthly, November.

The | Old English Dramatists | By | James Russell Lowell | Boston and New York | Houghton, Mifflin and Company | The Riverside Press, Cambridge | 1892

Parkman. The Century, November.

1893.

Letters of | James Russell Lowell | Edited by Charles Eliot Norton | New York | Harper & Brothers Publishers | 1894 [In two volumes.]

Humor, Wit, Fun and Satire. The Century, November.

The Five Indispensable Authors [Homer, Dante, Cervantes, Goethe, Shakspere]. The Century, December.

1894.

The Function of the Poet. The Century, January.

Criticism and Culture. The Century, February.

The Imagination. The Century, March.

Unpublished Fragments from College Lectures : i. The Study of Literature ; ii. Translation ; iii. Originality and Tradition in Literature ; iv. Choice in Reading ; v. The Search for Truth ; vi. Close of Lectures at Cornell University;

vii. Elements of the English Language; viii. The Poetic and the Actual; ix. Poetry in Homely Lines; x. Style; xi. Piers Ploughman; xii. Montaigne; xiii. The Humorous and the Comic; xiv. First Need of American Culture. The Harvard Crimson, 23 March–4 May.

Fragments: i. Life in Literature and Language; ii. Style and Manner; iii. Kalevala [with translation]. The Century, May.

Lowell's Letters to Poe. Scribner's Magazine, August.

1895.

Last Poems | of | James Russell Lowell | Boston and New York | Houghton, Mifflin and Company | The Riverside Press, Cambridge | MDCCCXCV

1896.

The Power of | *Sound* | a Rhymed | Lecture by James Russell Lowell | Privately | Printed | New York | MDCCCXCVI

1897.

Lectures | on | English Poets | By | James Russell Lowell |

— "Call up him who left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold

Cleveland | The Rowfant Club | MDCCCXCVII

1899.

Impressions of | Spain | James Russell Lowell | Compiled by | Joseph B. Gilder | with an introduction by A. A. Adee | Boston and New York | Houghton, Mifflin and Company | The Riverside Press | 1899

Verses written in a copy of Shakspere. The Century, November.

1900.

Verses: i. Written in a gift copy of Mr. Lowell's Poems; ii. Written in a copy of "Among my Books;" iii. Written in a copy of "Fireside Travels." Atlantic Monthly, December.

D. THE LOWELL MEMORIAL IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

From the London Times, Wednesday, 29 November, 1893

Mr. Leslie Stephen yesterday unveiled the memorial which has been placed in honor of the late James Russell Lowell at the entrance to the Chapter-house, Westminster Abbey. The memorial includes a window and a bust underneath, which is said to be an admirable likeness of the late American Minister. The window has been erected by Messrs. Clayton and Bell, and consists of three lights. In the centre is the figure of Sir Launfal, from Lowell's poem of that name, below is an angel with the Holy Grail, and in the lowest compartment the incident of Sir Launfal and the leper is represented. The right light has the figure of St. Botolph, the patron saint of the church of Boston, Lincolnshire, from which the Massachusetts city, Lowell's birthplace, derived its name; below is the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers. The light on the left contains the figure of St. Ambrose, one of the reputed authors of *Te Deum Laudamus;* below is a group representing the emancipation of slaves. In trefoils above the side-lights are shields bearing the arms of the United States and the United Kingdom.

Mr. A. J. Balfour was asked to take the chief part in yesterday's ceremony, but was prevented by illness from attending.

The Dean of Westminster presided, and the Chapter-

house was filled with a numerous audience. Among those who had been invited, and the greater number of whom were present, were the Lord Chancellor and Lady Herschell, the Duke and Duchess of Argyll, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Earl of Rosebery, Lord Knutsford, the Dowager Countess of Derby, the Earl and Countess of Pembroke, Lady Arthur Russell, Lord and Lady Coleridge, Lord and Lady Reay, Lord Aberdare, the Earl and Countess Brownlow, Lord and Lady R. Churchill, Adeline Duchess of Bedford, Lord and Lady Playfair, the Countess of Ashburton, Mr. J. Chamberlain, M. P., and Mrs. Chamberlain, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, M. P., the diplomatic representatives of America, Italy, Greece, Russia, Spain, Denmark, Germany, and France, Judge Hughes, Professor Huxley, Archdeacon Farrar, Sir Henry James, M. P., Sir J. Hassard, representing the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. Rathbone, M. P., General and Mrs. Clive, Miss Balfour, Mr. and Mrs. Gosse, Mrs. Lynn Linton, Mr. Spencer Lyttelton, Dr. Martineau, Mrs. Richmond Ritchie, Mr. and Mrs. Smalley, Mr. W. Besant, Miss Bradley, Mr. and Mrs. Darwin, Mrs. A. Murray Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Birrell, Mr. F. W. Gibbs, Mr. Austin Dobson, Mr. George Meredith, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Mr. Dykes Campbell, Mr. G. Du Maurier, and Mrs. Matthew Arnold. Sir William Harcourt was unavoidably prevented from attending by Ministerial business.

The Dean of Westminster said that he had been asked to take the chair on this interesting and suggestive occasion. They had met in that venerable and stately building to pay some tribute to the memory of one who, from the first day which he spent in this country up to the date of his death, had endeared himself to an ever-widening circle of friends, and who had for

many years been the representative in the Queen's dominions of that great Republic of the West. He would leave it to others to speak of Mr. Lowell's great qualities, and of the position which he held as a poet, a humorist, and essayist. Mr. Lowell was worthy to be reckoned among the great writers of our tongue — Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Dryden, and those poets whom we had so lately lost. They all deeply regretted the absence of Mr. Balfour and its cause, but they gratefully recognized the service which Mr. Leslie Stephen was rendering them by his presence. There was no one to whom the task of speaking of Mr. Lowell could so wisely be entrusted. In the presence of the American Ambassador he might, perhaps, be allowed to speak of the special fitness of the place in which they were assembled — which was a part of the ancient Abbey, the very heart and centre of that Benedictine monastery, and used solely as the daily meeting-place of the monks. There was no spot in the kingdom or in the world which could compare in historic interest and significance with that in which they were met. That part of the Abbey with which so many associations had gathered, and which was now known by the name of Poets' Corner, dated from the period of the commencement of the House of Commons, whose members in the earliest days and for three centuries of its existence were summoned within the walls of the Chapter-house. Thus the room where they were sitting was not only the meeting-place of the Benedictine monks of Westminster, but it was also for a long period the ordinary meeting-place of the Commons of England. After the dissolution of the monasteries, the Chapter-house was vested in the Crown, and was still so vested, and it was by the permission of the First Commissioner of Works that the

present meeting to do honor to a great American was held. For three more centuries after the Commons had ceased to be summoned to the Chapter-house, the house was used, he would not say as a lumber-room, but as a record-room in which were stored the invaluable documents which belonged to the House of Commons and the various Government offices. One deficiency, however, long remained, which his dear and illustrious predecessor long tried to remove. The late Dean endeavored to induce successive Governments to fill the windows with stained glass, but without success. After his death, however, one of the windows was filled. No meeting could have been more representative of the whole English-speaking race than the one which was held when that window was unveiled. He could imagine that he was still hearing the words which fell from Mr. Lowell on that occasion, *Si monumentum quæris, circumspice.* No words could have been more eloquent or impressive than those used by the American Minister of that day. That was the first time he himself had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Lowell's voice. The next historic meeting in that room was one called to unveil a painted window, the gift of the Queen, which was inserted in memory of Lady Augusta Stanley. That meeting, also, Mr. Lowell attended. Two years afterwards he had had the privilege, in his capacity of Dean, of summoning a meeting with a view to honor the American poet Longfellow, to whom a memorial stood in Poets' Corner. A fourth meeting was held in memory of one to whom as poet and thinker the older generation owed so much. It had been his privilege to place a bust in memory of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Mr. Lowell on that occasion made one of the most sympathetic and appreciative speeches to which he had ever

listened. They would all agree that no more suitable spot could be chosen on which to perpetuate the memory of one who was not only for many years the representative in this country of the great American Republic, but was so great an ornament to that language and literature which were the common heritage of Americans and Englishmen alike.

Speeches were made also by Mr. Leslie Stephen, Mr. J. Chamberlain, M. P., and Mr. Bayard, the American Ambassador.

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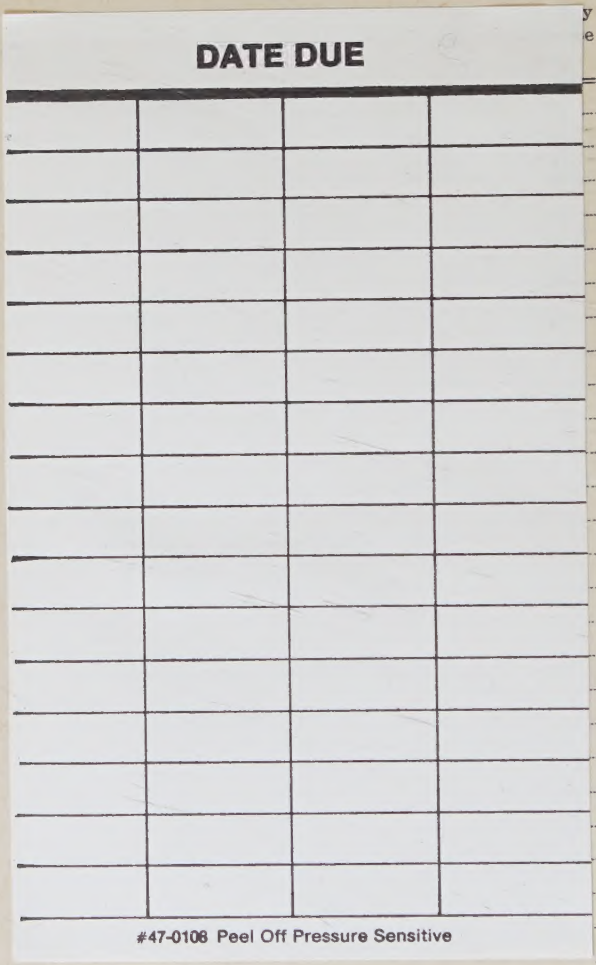

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